MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

ART • ARCHITECTURE • GASTRONOMY • ARCHAEOLOGY • HISTORY • MUSIC • LITERATURE

2012

& September–December 2011

MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

ART • ARCHITECTURE • GASTRONOMY • ARCHAEOLOGY • HISTORY • MUSIC • LITERATURE
Voysey House, Barley Mow Passage, London, United Kingdom W4 4GF
T 020 8742 3355 F 020 8742 7766 info@martinrandall.co.uk www.martinrandall.com

Dear traveller,

Maybe it's because we're hopelessly optimistic, or perhaps we're irresponsibly ambitious. I like to think it's the fecundity of our ideas and an unquenchable enthusiasm for what we do, combined with a business-like notion of what is possible.

By numerical measures, the trajectory continues upwards. For 2012 there are over 220 tours and residential events of which nearly 170 are different itineraries and programmes. Of these, 32 are new.

Growth areas include Britain (including a new MRT choral festival in Oxford) and, overlapping but coincidentally so, walking tours. A series of one-day events, initially in London, and a programme of tours to India (see page 76) are in advanced states of gestation.

But neither numbers nor newness really matter to us. Getting it right, striving ever to improve – minding when we don't – and delighting our clients: these are our motivators. Please survey these pages to see if there is something to tempt you to join this happy enterprise.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Randall
Chief Executive

5th July 2011

Directors: M.D.V. Randall (Chief Executive), Sir Vernon Ellis (Chairman), C. Denton, I.D. Hutchinson, N.M. Taylor, F.M. Urquhart
Registered office: Voysey House, Barley Mow Passage, London W4 4GF. Registered Company no. 2314294 England. VAT no. 527758803

Britain's leading cultural tour provider................4–6
List of holidays by country.................................. 7–9
Tour descriptions... 10–199
Our lecturers 200–205
Making a booking...206
Booking conditions 206
Booking form 207–208
List of holidays by date............................... 209–211

Front cover: Milan Cathedral, lithograph c. 1840. Facing page: Hôtel de Soubise, painting by François Boucher, etching 1884. Back cover: St Petersburg, etching 1912.
Above: 'The Wedding Breakfast' by Pieter Brueghel.

Britain's leading provider of cultural tours

At Martin Randall Travel we aim to provide the best planned, best led and altogether the most fulfilling and enjoyable 'cultural' tours available.

Within the areas of the world on which we concentrate – principally Europe and the Middle East – we offer an unsurpassed range of holidays focusing on art, architecture, music, archaeology, history or gastronomy. They are designed for people with enquiring minds and a desire to learn, understand and appreciate.

Inventive and pioneering, MRT has for over two decades led the cultural tours market by incessant innovation and by setting the benchmarks for itineraries, operational systems and service standards. Widely emulated, much imitated, never surpassed.

MRT is one of the most respected specialist travel companies in the world.

5th century head of Zeus, engraving c. 1860.

First-rate lecturers

Expert speakers are a key ingredient of all our holidays. Academics, writers, curators, broadcasters and researchers, they are selected not only for their knowledge but also for their ability to communicate that learning to a lay audience. Their brief is to enlighten and stimulate, not merely to inform. And they also have to be good travelling companions.

We select our lecturers through reputation, interview and audition, and provide them with guidance and training. Most of our tours are also accompanied by a trained tour manager, one of our staff or a freelance professional.

Original itineraries, meticulously planned

Our itineraries are original, imaginative, well-paced and carefully balanced. Thorough research and assiduous reconnaissance underpin the design process. Knowledge of the subject matter and the destination combine with meticulous attention to practical matters to ensure an enriching and smooth-running experience.

Many of our holidays incorporate special arrangements for admission to places not generally open to individual travellers, or for access at times when they are closed to the public. In innumerable small ways, we lift the experience for our clients above standards and services which are regarded as normal for tourists.

We bring organisational skills of a high order to our large and complex events, principally our all-inclusive music festivals.

Travelling in comfort

We select our hotels with great care. All have been inspected, and many have been stayed in, by a member of our staff. Hundreds of others have been seen and rejected.

Obviously comfort ranks high among our criteria, together with service standards and warmth of welcome, and we also set high priority on charm and appropriate style. An important consideration is location. For city-based tours, there is a strong preference for the historic centre, where this does not conflict with the criterion of quiet.

Most of the hotels we use are rated as 4-star, with some 5-star and a few 3-star. We invest similar efforts into the selection of restaurants, menus and wines.

For flights and trains, we try to choose the most convenient departure times and airports, although for many routes there is little choice of either. Seats on Eurostar are in 'superior class'.

We can provide a holiday without the international flights or trains if you prefer, allowing you to make your own arrangements for international travel.

(It is usually possible to make other variations to the package. There is an administrative fee of at least £40.)

Small groups and congenial company

We strictly limit the numbers on our small-group tours. The maximum allowed on a tour, which ranges from 15 to 22, is stated in each tour description. The average is somewhere between, though occasionally tours run with as few as 7 or 8.

The higher costs of smaller numbers are outweighed by the benefits of manoeuvrability, social cohesion and access to the lecturer.

The small-group principle is not applied to tours on which there are private concerts, arranged by ourselves.

Not the least attractive aspect of travelling with MRT is that you are highly likely to find yourself in congenial company, self-selected by common interests and endorsement of the company's ethos.

Care for our clients

We aim for faultless administration from your first encounter with us to the end of the holiday, and beyond. Personal service is a feature. And if anything does go wrong, we will put it right or compensate appropriately. We want you to come back again and again – as most of our clients do.

Counter to attitudes widespread in the travel industry, we never forget our clients are responsible adults, deserving of respect and courtesy at all times.

Value for money, and no surcharges

The price includes nearly everything, not only the major ingredients such as hotel, transportation and the costs of the lecturer, but also tips for waiters, drivers and guides, wine with meals, airport taxes and credit card charges.

We do not levy surcharges for fuel price increases, exchange rate changes, additional taxes or for any other reason. The price published in this brochure is the price you pay.

Illustration. Karaman, aquatint 1812.

Relief sculpture from Ephesus, engraving 1764.

Fitness and age

Ours are active holidays, with walking an unavoidable element. They are also group holidays, which means that participants need to move around together at a pace which is comfortable for the majority.

The amount of walking varies. Sometimes there is a lot on streets that are steep or poorly paved, or you may need to scramble over fallen masonry and uneven ground. More usually it is just a case of getting from one place to another within a town. Coaches can rarely enter historic city centres or get right to the entrance of a country house or concert hall.

Like a convoy, groups move at the pace of the slowest; slow walkers reduce the time at the places everyone in the group has come to see.

Our tours should not present problems for anyone who manages everyday walking and stair-climbing without difficulty. But please consult us if you have any doubts about your ability to cope. If for any stage, including the airports, you would like the use of a wheelchair then these holidays are unlikely to be suitable for you. It is also unlikely that you would cope if you habitually use a walking stick.

We do have some tours which are designated as walking holidays and offer countryside hikes as an integral ingredient. There is another scale of fitness requirements for these.

Age limit. We regret that applications for small-group tours from people who would be aged eighty-one or over at the time of the tour will not be accepted. We know this is a harsh and somewhat arbitrary rule but it has virtually eliminated instances of tours being spoilt for the majority because of the inability of one or two individuals to cope.

There is no age limit for our own large-scale music festivals (in 2012: *Rhine, Danube, Oxford, Rome*), though the same fitness criteria apply. This is because there is more opportunity to move at ones own pace.

Walking tours

A small but growing number of our tours include country walking as an integral part of the itinerary. They fall, very loosely, into two categories, the less and the more strenuous.

The less strenuous – the majority – have walks usually for only half the day, usually of not more than about 5 miles (8 km), often less. The tours falling into this category in 2011 and 2012 include *Walking the Danube, Walking on Samos and Chios, Walking in Tuscany, British Action in the Straits, Walking in the Thames Valley, Stonehenge, The Cotswolds, Walking in Cornwall* and *Walking Hadrian's Wall.*

The more strenuous tours have walks of up to 10 miles (16 km) a day. For 2012, these are *Walking in Sicily, Walking in the Canary Islands, Hill Walking in Extremadura* and *Walking to Santiago.*

Both categories remain 'cultural' tours in that they are accompanied by a lecturer who provides talks and commentary, as on all our other tours. On the less strenuous tours, the mornings or afternoons without walks are spent in the usual MRT activities of looking or listening, or, sometimes, resting.

For all the walking tours participants need to be well used to country walking and to have a good level of fitness. Invariably there are ascents and descents, climbs over stiles and terrain which is uneven or stony. Only in weather conditions which are so extreme as to be dangerous would a walk be cancelled. The distance of each walk and the nature of the terrain are given in detail in each tour description, and further information and advice is given to participants in advance.

Financial security

ATOL. Holidays in this brochure are protected by the ATOL scheme because we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. This means that in the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking. Holidays which do not include flights are similarly protected by the AITO Trust.

The Association of Independent Tour Operators. Martin Randall Travel is a member of AITO, an association of specialist travel companies most of which are independent and owner-managed. Admission is selective, and members are subject to a code of practice which prescribes high standards of professionalism and customer care. To contact the Association visit www.aito.co.uk or call 020 8744 9280.

TOURS BY COUNTRY

FOR A LIST OF HOLIDAYS BY DATE, SEE PAGES 209–211

ARMENIA

Armenia 10

AUSTRIA

The Danube Music Festival 12
Walking the Danube 12
Salzburg Summer 12
Mozart in Salzburg 13
Opera in Vienna 14
Vienna at Christmas 15
Klimt & Secessionist Vienna NEW 16
Operetta in Austria 18
The Schubertiade 18
Haydn in Eisenstadt 18

BELGIUM

Flemish Painting 19
The Battle of Waterloo 20

CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech Music in Brno & Prague 22
Bohemia NEW 23
Connoisseur's Prague NEW 24

DENMARK

Danish Art & Design 25
Opera in Oslo, Gothenburg & Copenhagen 26

EGYPT

Ancient Egypt 27
Cairo & Alexandria 29
Christmas in the Desert 31
Deserts & Oases 32
Exploring Middle Egypt 33
Sinai 34

ESTONIA

The Baltic States 35

FINLAND

Savonlinna Opera 37
Helsinki Opera NEW 37

FRANCE

Brittany NEW 38
French Gothic 39
The History of Impressionism 40

Fiesole, from 'Country Walks about Florence' 1926.

Poets & the Somme 42
Opera in Paris 43
Cézanne in Paris NEW 44
Matisse & his World NEW 45
Mediaeval Burgundy 46
Toulouse & Albi 47
Cave Art of France NEW 49
Roman & Mediaeval Provence 50
Opera at Aix & Orange 51
Modern Art on the Côte d'Azur 52
Gardens of the Riviera 53
Persia in Europe 195

GERMANY

The Rhine Valley Music Festival 55
Music in Berlin 56
Berlin, Potsdam, Dresden 58
Art & Music in Dresden 60
Opera in Dresden & Leipzig 61
Music in the Saxon Hills NEW 62
Mitteldeutschland 63
German Romanesque 65
Beethoven in Bonn 66
Handel in Halle 67
Dürer & Riemenschneider NEW 68
Baroque & Rococo 69
Persia in Europe 195

NEW

Klimt & Secessionist Vienna 16
Connoisseur's Prague 24
Opera in Oslo, Gothenburg & Copenhagen 26
Helsinki Opera 37
Brittany 38
Cézanne in Paris 44
Matisse & his World 45
Cave Art of France 49
Music in the Saxon Hills 62
Dürer & Riemenschneider 68
Walking on Samos & Chios 73
Der Rosenkavalier at La Scala 84
Parma Verdi Festival 84
The History of Medicine 99
Leonardo & Michelangelo 114
Sardinia 124
Walking in Sicily 125
Gastronomy & Walking in Lebanon 128
Rabat, Fez & Marrakech 130
Norway: Art, Architecture, Landscape 131
Saxon Transylvania 137
British Actions in the Straits 158
Mediaeval Middle England 167
Cathedrals of England 175
Grampian Gardens 175
York at Christmas 175
Charles Dickens 180
Great Houses of the South West 188
Turner & the Sea 190
The Divine Office: A Choral Festival in Oxford 193
Moore & Hepworth 195

From 'The Foreign tour of Brown, Jones & Robinson' 1904.

Greece

Classical Greece 71
Walking on Samos & Chios NEW 73

Hungary

Budapest at Christmas 74
Hungary 75
The Danube Music Festival 12
The Budapest Spring Festival 75

India

Tours to India in 2013 NEW 76

Ireland

Wexford Opera 77

Israel

Israel & Palestine 78

Italy

Gardens & Villas of the Italian Lakes 80
Gastronomic Piedmont 81
Genoa & Turin 82
Der Rosenkavalier at La Scala NEW 84
Parma Verdi Festival NEW 84
Palladian Villas 85
Villas of the Veneto 86
The Veneto 87
Verona Opera 88
The Venetian Hills 89
The Art History of Venice 90
Venice Revisited 91
Venetian Palaces 92
Writers' Venice 94
Courts of Northern Italy 95
Dark Age Brilliance 96
Ravenna & Urbino 98
History of Medicine NEW 99
Lucca 100
Torre del Lago 101
A Festival of Music in Florence 101
Florence 102
Florence Revisited 103
Writers' Florence 104
San Gimignano 105
Walking in Tuscany 106
Gardens of Tuscany 108
The Heart of Italy 109
Villas & Gardens of Campagna Romana 110
Trasimeno Music Festival 111
Opera in Pesaro 111
The Road to Rome 112
Leonardo & Michelangelo NEW 114
Ancient Rome 115
Connoisseur's Rome 116
Caravaggio 117
Rome: a Festival of Music 117
Pompeii & Herculaneum 118
Naples: Art, Antiquities & Opera 119
Normans in the South 119
Sicily 120
Palermo 122
Sardinia NEW 124
Walking in Sicily NEW 125

Jordan

Essential Jordan 126

Latvia

The Baltic States 35

Lebanon

Lebanon 128
Gastronomy & Walking in Lebanon NEW 128

Lithuania

The Baltic States 35

Morocco

Morocco 129
Rabat, Fez, Marrakech NEW 130

Norway

Norway: Art, Architecture, Landscape NEW 131
Bergen Music Festival 132
Opera in Oslo, Gothenburg & Copenhagen 26

Palestine

Palestine NEW 133
Israel & Palestine 78

Portugal

The Heart of Portugal 134
Lisbon Neighbourhoods NEW 136

Romania

Saxon Transylvania NEW 137

Russia

St Petersburg 139

Spain

The Road to Santiago 141
Walking to Santiago 143
Castile & León 145
Bilbao to Bayonne 146
Gaudí & the Guggenheim 147
Art in Madrid 148
Gastronomic Spain 149

Valencia 150
Opera in Spain 151
Hill Walking in Extremadura 151
Granada & Córdoba 153
Andalucía 154
Gastronomic Andalucía 155
Semana Santa in Spain 157
British Actions in the Straits NEW 158
Walking in the Canary Islands 159

SWEDEN

Drottningholm & Confidencen 160
Opera in Oslo, Gothenburg & Copenhagen 26

SWITZERLAND

Art in Switzerland 161
The Lucerne Piano Festival 162
Lucerne Summer 162

TURKEY

Ottoman Turkey 163
Istanbul 164
Eastern Turkey 164
Classical Turkey 165

UNITED KINGDOM

Mediaeval Middle England NEW 167
West Country Churches 168
Walking Hadrian's Wall 169
Stonehenge 171
North Wales 172
The Cotswolds 174
Cathedrals of England NEW 175
West Country Gardens 175
Grampian Gardens NEW 175
York at Christmas NEW 175
Country House Opera 175
Walking in Cornwall 176
Walking the Thames Valley 178
Shakespeare & his World 179
Charles Dickens NEW 180
The Victorian Achievement 181
In Churchill's Footsteps 183
Great Houses of the North 184
Great Houses of the East 186
Great Houses of the South West NEW 188

Kelmscott Manor, after a drawing by Charles G. Harper from 'Thames Valley Villages' 1910.

Ardgowan 189
Turner & the Sea NEW 190
Opera in Cardiff 192
The Divine Office: A Choral Festival in Oxford NEW 193
Politics & Politicians At the Castle Hotel 193
Historians At Jesmond Dene House 193
Chamber Music Weekends 194
The Vienna Piano Trio
The Academy of Ancient Music
The Chilingirian Quartet
The Nash Ensemble
The Fitzwilliam String Quartet & Friends
The Schubert Ensemble
Moore & Hepworth NEW 195
Persia in Europe 195

UNITED STATES

East Coast Galleries 196
Frank Lloyd Wright 197

UZBEKISTAN

Transoxiana 198

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C021351

This brochure was produced in-house, principally by Jo Murray, Fiona Urquhart and Martin Randall but all staff were involved.

Awards

AITO (Association of Independent Tour Operators) Travel Company of the Year: 2006, 2008, 2009.

Travel Advertising Awards, Best Brochure: Gold Award 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2006, Silver Award 2003.

The Observer, Best Travel Brochure 1996.

Italian State Tourist Office, The Most Intriguing Tour Operator 1998; Best Cultural Tour Operator 2009.

National Geographic, 50 Tours of a Lifetime 2008, 2009.

Travel Marketing Awards, Best Press Consumer Advertisement, Silver Award 2009.

Direct Marketing Awards, Best Use of Copy, Silver Award 2009.

Sustainable tourism

We adhere to the AITO charter which includes a commitment to raising the level of environmental awareness. We have been awarded three stars under the AITO Sustainable Tourism assessment scheme.

We travel by rail rather than by air from London on some of our European holidays. We limit group size, one benefit of which is to reduce environmental impact. All our brochures are printed on paper certified by the FSC.

Our sustainable tourism policy is published in full at www.martinrandall.com.

ARMENIA

MONASTERIES & MODERN-DAY YEREVAN

20–27 June 2012 (MY 274)
8 days • £2,550
Lecturer: Alan Ogden

Monasteries and other sacred buildings from as early as the seventh century.

Outstanding mountainous landscape.

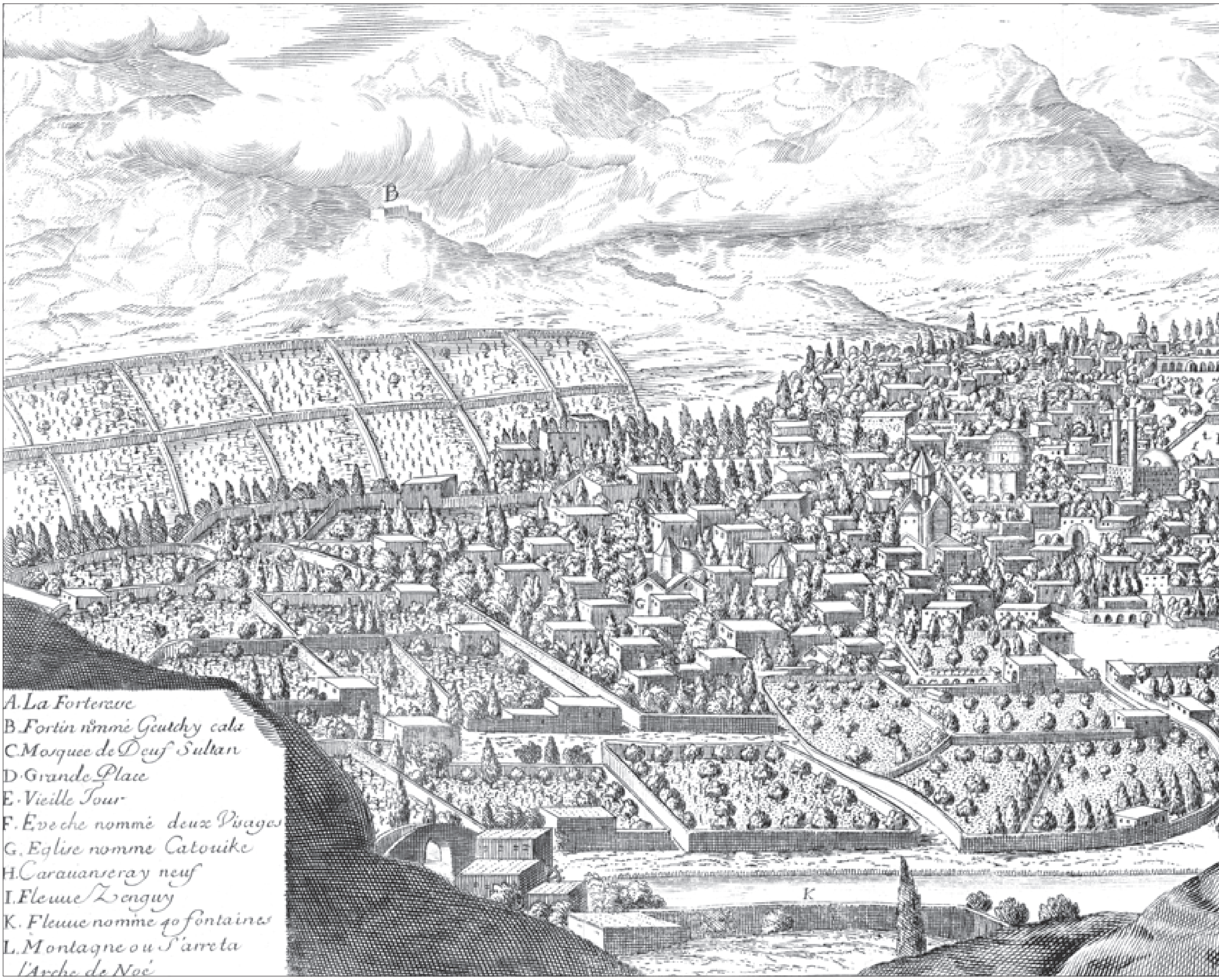
Time to get to know Yerevan, with its squares, cafés and street-life.

Comfortable hotels and surprisingly good food.

Of all the lands straddling east and west, the nation of Armenia is perhaps least like a gateway and most like a frontier. 'Unique' is a lazy and unenlightening epithet with which to characterise distant lands, but Armenia, both ancient and new, both Asian and European, both a melting-pot and defiantly individual, is fully deserving of the description.

Its long and tenacious history is one of frequent tragedy and renewal. At its apogee in the first century BC, Armenia stretched from the Mediterranean to the Caspian, and almost to the Black Sea. For the next three centuries, however, Armenia would suffer conquest and reconquest as the Romans and the Parthians traded blows in the southern Caucasus, with intermittent periods of self-rule keeping the flame of independence alive.

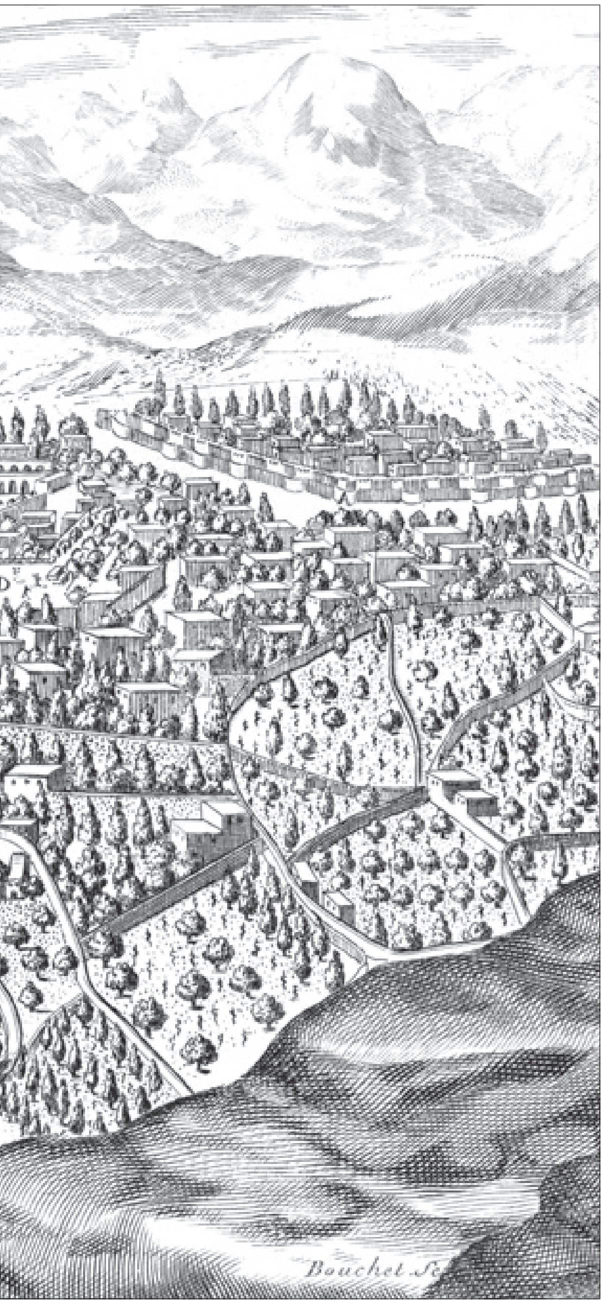
It was in large part to keep themselves distinct from the two vast empires on either hand that the Armenians adopted the new religion of Christianity in AD 301, developing a new alphabet a hundred years after that. These two markers of Armenian identity survived domination by Byzantines, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and Russians, as did many spectacular religious buildings, which were built to withstand not just invasions but


Yerevan, mid-18th-century engraving.
B
K
A. La Forteresse
B Fortin nmmé Geutchy cale
C Mosquee de Deuf Sultan
D·Grande Place
E·Vieille Tour
F. Eveche nommé deux Visages
G. Eglise nomme Catouike
H. Carauanseray neuf
I. Fleuue Zenguy
K. Fleuue nomme 40 fontaines
L. Montagne ou s'arreta l'Arche de Noé

earthquakes too.

Armenia's sacred architecture was a greater influence on mediaeval Europe than is commonly assumed, after its round towers and cross-plans were noted by returning crusaders. Thick-walled, built from tuff or basalt, and housing a particularly severe strain of eastern Christianity, there is a resplendent austerity about these monasteries which is only heightened by their frequently spectacular natural surroundings.

Many of the finest, including the rock-hewn Geghard and the UNESCO world heritage site of Echmiadzin, are easily visited from the capital, Yerevan. And while calling Yerevan the most sensitively-remodelled of all Soviet cities may sound like damnation with the faintest praise imaginable, today it is attractive and confident, its proliferation of cafés, galleries and public spaces making it a truly pleasant place to spend time. In the north of the country are two more UNESCO-listed monasteries, at Sanahin and Haghpat, and detailed thirteenth-century frescoes at Akhtala.



Meanwhile Yerevanis live, work and socialise in the literal and metaphorical shadow of Ararat, still Armenia's most emotive symbol despite now being on Turkish land. Like the resurgent Christianity in the monasteries, like the native alphabet, the land itself is not just a reminder of Armenia's past but a constant and relevant presence for today.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.30pm from London Heathrow to Yerevan, arriving c. 6.30am (time in the air: c. 4 hours 30 minutes). Transfer to the hotel in the heart of the city.

Day 2: Yerevan. A leisurely start this morning. The afternoon begins with a drive through the city to the enormous Cascade. The State Museum of Armenian History is comprehensive and fascinating. At the National Art Gallery see works by Botticelli, Tintoretto, Canova and Kandinsky. Overnight Yerevan.

Day 3: Echmiadzin, Yerevan. The seat of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Echmiadzin is also a UNESCO world heritage site. The Holy Lance that pierced Christ's side is held in its treasury. The vast ruined cathedral at neighbouring Zvartnots is awe-inspiring. Back in Yerevan, the Museum of the Armenian Genocide is all the more powerful for its simplicity. Overnight Yerevan.

Day 4: Lake Sevan, Dzoraget. The Hellenic temple at Garni is the last remaining pre-Christian site in Armenia. Much of the monastery at nearby Geghard is carved out of the cliffside. Drive on to the beautiful Lake Sevan, and the peerlessly situated Sevanavank monastery that overlooks it. First of two nights in Dzoraget.

Day 5: Akhtala, Alaverdi. The thirteenth-century frescoes in Akhtala are strongly influenced by Byzantium. The monasteries at Haghpat and Sanahin, both UNESCO-listed sites, are perhaps the finest examples of Armenian sacred architecture. Overnight Dzoraget.

Day 6: Amberd, Yerevan. Return to Yerevan via the idyllic ruins of the 11th-century Amberd Fortress. In Yerevan visit the Matenadaran, a repository of 17,000 illuminated manuscripts. Overnight Yerevan.

Day 7: Khor Virap, Noravank, Yerevan. Visit the Khor Virap monastery on the foothills of Mount Ararat, where St Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned before converting Armenia to Christianity. Noravank, the masterwork of the architect and sculptor Momik, is perhaps the most beautiful of Armenia's thirteenth-century monasteries. Back to Yerevan for some free time.

Day 8. The morning flight from Yerevan arrives Heathrow at c. 1.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,550 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on bmi flights (aircraft: Airbus 321); accommodation as described below; travel by private air-conditioned coach throughout; breakfasts, all lunches and all dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to museums, churches and sites; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and a local guide. **Single supplement £340**. **Price without flights £2,030.**

Visas: These are required for all foreign nationals. We obtain the visa for anyone flying with the group (if flying independently it costs c. £6). Passports must be valid for at least six months after the tour ends.

Hotels: In Yerevan (5 nights): a recently-renovated, international 5-star hotel on the central square, impersonal but with excellent facilities. In Dzoraget (2 nights): in a wonderful riverside location, a small and stylish hotel, equivalent to a 4-star.

Food: suprisingly good for carnivores, but options for vegetarians are very limited and special dietary requirements cannot be catered for at all.

How strenuous? You will be on your feet for long periods. Many of the sites are reached by steep, uneven steps. The tour would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. There are some long coach journeys (average distance by coach per day: 64 miles).

Small group: the tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

Flight schedules can change at short notice. We recommend you keep diaries clear for a day either side of these dates.

THE DANUBE MUSIC FESTIVAL

PRIVATE CONCERTS IN PALACES, CHURCHES & HISTORIC THEATRES

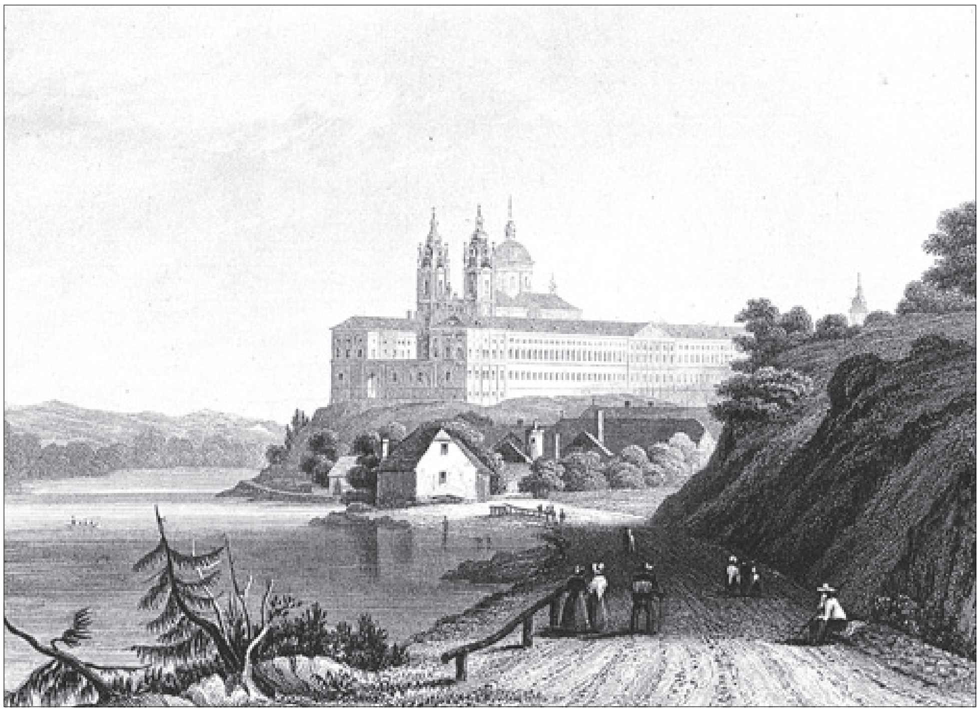
17–24 August 2012 (MY 333)
8 days
Full details available in October 2011.

Nine concerts in palaces, theatres, churches and manor houses which are all related in some way to the music.

The concerts are private, admission being exclusive to the hundred or so who participate fully in the festival.

The audience lives for the week on board a first-class river cruiser on the Danube.

Full details will be published in October 2011.



Melk Abbey, steel engraving c. 1850.

This festival combines music and architecture in a singularly beguiling way. The palaces, churches, abbeys, country houses, concert halls and theatres in which the concerts take place are among the most magnificent or delightful buildings along the Danube. But the value of the juxtaposition goes deeper than visual attraction. The buildings are generally of the same period as the pieces performed in them, and in some places there are specific historical associations between the two. Matching music and place – that is the governing principle of this festival. 2012 will be its nineteenth year.

The world-class musicians are from the UK, Austria, Hungary and the Czech Republic and provide concerts of rich and varied music exploring the repertoire of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The audience is small – no more than 120 – which when taken with the relatively intimate size of most of the venues results in a rare intensity of musical experience. To this exceptional artistic experience is added a further pleasure, the comfort and convenience of a first-class river cruiser which is both hotel and principal means of travel.

Details will be published in October 2011. Contact us to register for advance information.

WALKING THE DANUBE

SIX CONCERTS FROM 'THE DANUBE MUSIC FESTIVAL'

16–23 August 2012 (MY 332)

Full details available in October 2011.
Register your interest now.

This tour attends selected concerts from *The Danube Music Festival* (also arranged by Martin Randall Travel). The walking tour includes six concerts and six country walks of between two and five miles while the festival audience travels by ship. The Austrian stretch of the Danube valley is, for much of its length, of considerable beauty, with much variety of landscape – cultivated lowlands, forested peaks, open alluvial plains, vine-clad hillsides, upland pastures, and, of course, the mighty river meandering towards the Black Sea. There are pine and fir and larch, but broadleaves predominate – beech, birch, oak, poplar.

Walking remains incomparably the best mode of locomotion through scenery on which the eye would like to linger. Only on foot can one stop at will to savour a panoramic vista or to zoom in to a flower, hear the birds or smell the earth. For lovers both of walking and of music, this is a perfect holiday.

Though not hardly classifiable as strenuous, this tour should only be considered by those who are used to regular country walking with some uphill content. There are hills, and a few fairly steep climbs for short stretches, but no mountains, and most of the routes are along gently undulating paths. The durations are between two and two-and-a-half hours.

SALZBURG SUMMER

August 2012

Details available in January 2012.
Register your interest now.

Performances at the world's most prestigious music festival along with visits and excursions in and around the exeptionally lovely little city of Salzburg. Please contact us now to register your interest.

MOZART IN SALZBURG

THE ANNUAL WINTER FESTIVAL

28 January–2 Feb. 2012 (MY 159)
6 days • £2,790
(including tickets to 6 performances)
Lecturer: Richard Wigmore

An annual winter festival, the 'Mozartwoche', in the composer's birthplace.

An outstanding line-up of orchestras, chamber groups and soloists, with a predominance of music by Mozart.

Five-star hotel close to the Mozarteum.

Can be linked with 'Opera in Vienna' (see page 14), 23–28 January, travelling from Vienna to Salzburg by rail. Ask for details.

Salzburg is that rare thing, a tiny city with world-class standards in nearly everything the discerning visitor – and resident – would want. It is miraculous that such charm, and such grandeur, and, above all, such unparalleled weight of musical achievement should be concentrated in so small a place.

A virtually independent city-state from its origins in the early Middle Ages until its absorption into the Habsburg Empire in the nineteenth century, Salzburg's days of glory had all but slipped into the past by the time Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born there. He became the unwitting instigator, post-mortem, of Salzburg's transformation from minor ecclesiastical seat to the world's foremost city of music festivals. There are five of them. The Mozartwoche (Mozart Week) held in January every year celebrates Salzburg's most famous son with musicians famed worldwide for their Mozart interpretations.

Our tour allows the concerts to be interspersed with a gentle programme of walks and an excursion to some of the finest art and architecture and scenic beauty in the region. But plenty of free time is also allowed for individual exploration of the city, or just for relaxing to prepare for the next concert.

The city has several museums - a recent addition is a Museum of Contemporary Art in a cliff-top location overlooking the city, and the city's principal museum, the Carolino Augusteum, has at last been transferred to a part of the Archbishop's palace. Also, relatively recent is the complete refurbishment of the Kleines Festspielhaus, one of the smaller auditoria, now renamed the Haus für Mozart.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow to Munich. After a drive from Munich to Salzburg, take a guided tour of the Mozarteum archive. Introductory lecture and dinner.

Engraving 1880s.

Day 2. You have the option to attend a musically embellished service at one of the churches for which Mozart composed, the magnificent Baroque cathedral and the abbey church of St Peter. Walk through the heart of the old city with a local guide and visit the excellent museum in the Mozart family home. *Concert at the Großes Festspielhaus with the Bavarian Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra, Sir John Eliot Gardiner (conductor), Emanuel Ax (piano): Mozart, music from 'Idomeneo', K.367; Mozart, Concerto in E flat, K.482; Schumann, Symphony No.2 in C, Op.61.*

Day 3. *Morning concert at the Mozarteum with Camerata Salzburg, Louis Langrée (conductor), Carolin Widmann (violin): Mozart, Symphony No.34 in C, K.338; Mozart, Violin Concerto No.3 in G, K.216; Frank Martin, 'Polyptyque' for Violin and Two Small String Orchestras; Mozart, Symphony No.41 in C, K.551 'Jupiter'.* Lunch after the concert followed by a visit to Mozart's birthplace. *Evening concert at the Mozarteum with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, David Afkham (conductor), Mojca Erdmann (soprano): Schönberg, 'Verklärte Nacht', Op.4 (arr. for orchestra); Arias by Mozart and his contemporaries: Ignaz Holzbauer, Aria from 'Günter von Schwarzburg'; Mozart, Arias from 'Zaïde' and 'Idomeneo'; Antonio Salieri, Recitative and Arias from 'Les Danaïdes'; Mozart, Symphony in G minor; Mark Andre, 'Üg'.*

Day 4. After a lecture depart for an excursion through the ravishing landscapes of the Salzkammergut to Bad Ischl, with lunch here. Free afternoon. *Piano recital at the Mozarteum with Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss: Mozart, Piano Sonatas; Chopin, Two Nocturnes, Op.62, and Polonaise-Fantasie in A flat, Op.61; Schumann, Waldszenen, Op.82; Schönberg, 'Sechs Kleine Klavierstücke', Op.19; Mozart, Piano Sonata in F for Four Hands, K.497; Mark Andre, iv 4 for Wind Instruments.*

Day 5. Optional walk to St Sebastian cemetery where several members of the Mozart family are buried *Morning concert at the Mozarteum with the Hagen Quartet: Mozart, String Quartet No.21 in D, K.575; Bartók, String Quartet No.4 in C, SZ 91; Brahms, String Quartet No.3 in B flat, Op.67.* Some free time before the evening concert *at the Großes Festspielhaus with the Vienna Philharmonic, Ivan Fischer (conductor), Radu Lupu (piano): Mozart: Serenata Notturna, K.239; Piano Concerto in B flat, K.595; March in D major No.1, K.335 (320a); Symphony in D major 'Prague', K.504.*

Day 6. The flight from Munich arrives at London Heathrow c. 2.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,790 (deposit £300); this includes: 6 tickets costing c. 600; air travel (economy class) with British Airways (Airbus A319 Jet); accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; private coach for the excursion and transfers; all admissions to museums, etc.; all tips for waiters, drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer; **single supplement £220** (double room for single occupancy); **price without flights £2,660**.

Hotel: excellently located two minutes walk from the Mozarteum and just across the river from the Festspielhaus (600 metres). It is a 5-star family run hotel occupying an old building which has been impeccably converted. Luxurious but not lavish. Included lunches and dinners are in the hotel and in carefully selected restaurants elsewhere.

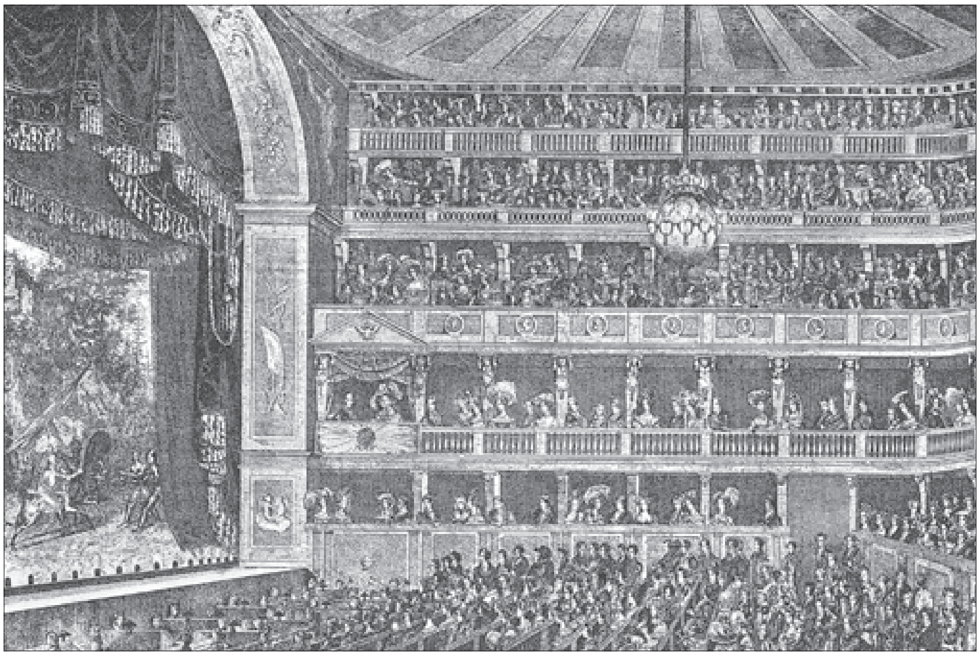
How strenuous? A fair amount of walking is unavoidable, and the tour is planned on the expectation that participants walk to and from the concert venues; average distance by coach per day: c. 44 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

Opera in Vienna

The Magic Flute, Iolanta & Francesca da Rimini, The Barber of Seville, Otello

In the three great theatres



Theater an der Wien, engraving 1826.

23–28 January 2012 (MY 160)
6 days • £2,880
Lecturer: Daniel Snowman

Opera in all three of the great opera houses in Vienna on four successive evenings:

Tchaikovsky (*Iolanta*) and Rachmaninov (*Francesca da Rimini*) double bill at the recently reopened Theater an der Wien.

Rossini (*Barber of Seville*) and Verdi (*Otello*) at the Staatsoper, one of the world's top houses.

Mozart (*Magic Flute*) at the Volksoper.

Accompanied by an opera historian and critic, and with a programme of city walks and visits.

Option of combining with 'Mozart in Salzburg', 28 January–2 February (see page 13), travelling from Vienna to Salzburg by rail on the final day.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 2.30pm from London Heathrow to Vienna. Arrive at the hotel in time to settle in before dinner.

Day 2. The day begins with a talk on the music and continues with a visit to the Hofburg, the sprawling Habsburg palace. There is free time in the afternoon before an evening of opera at the Theater an der Wien, which dates from 1801. We are seeing two one-act operas, ***Iolanta*** (Tchaikovsky 1892) and ***Francesca da Rimini*** (Rachmaninov 1906), with Kirill Petrenko (conductor), Stephen Lawless (director), ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, Arnold Schoenberg Choir, Olga Mykytenko, David Pittsinger et al. In Russian with German surtitles.

Day 3. The morning walk through the centre of the inner city includes the Stephansdom, the great Gothic cathedral, the Baroque church of St Peter and an apartment lived in by Mozart when he wrote *Figaro.* Today the talk is before dinner, which precedes the opera at the Staatsoper: ***The Barber of Seville*** (Rossini 1816) with Karel Mark Chichon (conductor), Richard Bletschacher (director), Juan Francisco Gatell (Almaviva), Lars Woldt (Bartolo), Isabel Leonard (Rosina), Adrian Eröd (Figaro), Michele Pertusi (Basilio).

Day 4. The daily lecture precedes a visit to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, one of the world's greatest art galleries. Then take a tram along the Ringstrasse to the Museum of Applied Arts, starting with lunch in its restaurant. At the Staatsoper: ***Otello*** (Verdi 1887) with Dan Ettinger (conductor), Christine Mielitz (director), Peter Seiffert (Otello), Carlos Alvarez (Iago), Krassimira Stoyanova (Desdemona).

Day 5. Visit the Church of St Charles, a magnificent Baroque building brimming with symbolism, and the Museum of the History of Vienna which explains the city with many fine artefacts and artworks. Free time is followed by a talk, dinner and an evening at the Volksoper, home of light and comic opera: ***The Magic Flute*** (Mozart 1791) directed by Helmuth Lohner.

Day 6. The final morning is free. The flight to Heathrow arrives at c. 4.30pm.

Alternatively, travel by train from Vienna to Salzburg (3½ hours) to join 'Mozart in Salzburg', 28 January–2 February (page 13).

Practicalities

Price: £2,880 (deposit £300). This includes: opera tickets costing c. £540; air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 320); some travel by private coach and tram; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for drivers, waiters and local guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £300. Price without flights £2,720.**

It is possible to combine this tour with *Mozart in Salzburg* (28 January–2 February 2012). Please ask us for details and prices.

Hotels: a venerable and comfortable 5-star hotel in a superb location on the Ringstrasse next to the Staatsoper. All rooms are excellently equipped. There are two restaurants and a bar. Dinners are at the hotel and selected restaurants.

Music tickets will be confirmed in September.

How strenuous? There is quite a bit of walking, some over uneven ground. There is free time on most afternoons before the performances. Average distance by coach per day: 5 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Opera

Vienna at Christmas 15
Operetta in Austria 18
Czech Music in Brno & Prague 22
Savonlinna Opera 37
Opera in Paris 43
Opera at Aix & Orange 51
Music in Berlin 56
Opera in Dresden & Leipzig 61
Budapest at Christmas 74
Wexford Opera 77
Rosenkavalier at La Scala 84
Verona Opera 88
Torre del Lago 101
Opera in Pesaro 111
Drottningholm & Confidencen 160
Country House Opera 175
Opera in Cardiff 192

Vienna at Christmas

Art, architecture & music in the Habsburg Capital

20–27 December 2011 (MY 130)
8 days • £2,980
Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremeier

Comprehensive look at Vienna's art and architecture.

Excursions to Melk and Steinhof.

Operas at the Theater an der Wien (*L'Orfeo*), the Vienna Staatsoper (*The Marriage of Figaro*) and Volksoper (*Hänsel und Gretel*), plus two optional performances.

Vienna was once the seat of the Habsburgs, the centre of the Holy Roman Empire and capital of a multinational agglomeration of territories which encompassed much of Central and Eastern Europe. Today she is an imperial city without an empire. She is a relic, but a glorious relic, and one of the world's foremost centres of art, architecture and music.

The Kunsthistorisches Museum ranks with the best of Europe's art collections, and the Court Treasury is without peer for its display of historic regalia and objets d'art. The great Gothic cathedral bears witness to the city's status in the Middle Ages as the most important city in Danubian Europe; the Church of St Charles and numerous Baroque palaces demonstrate that by the beginning of the eighteenth century Austria had become one of the great powers.

During the nineteenth century, when the Empire reached a peak of extent and prestige, a splendid range of historicist buildings was added, notably on the Ringstrasse, the grand boulevard which encircles the mediaeval core. Around the turn of the century there was an explosion of artistic and intellectual activity which placed Vienna in the forefront of Art Nouveau – here known as Secession – and the development of modernism.

Not all is on a grand scale. Tucked behind the imposing palaces and public buildings are narrow alleys and ancient courtyards which survive from the mediaeval and Renaissance city. In Vienna the magnificent mixes with the unpretentiously charming, imperial display with the Gemütlichkeit of the coffee houses.

As home for Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Mahler and countless others, Vienna is pre-eminent in the history of music. Musical activity of the highest order continues and we include three performances.

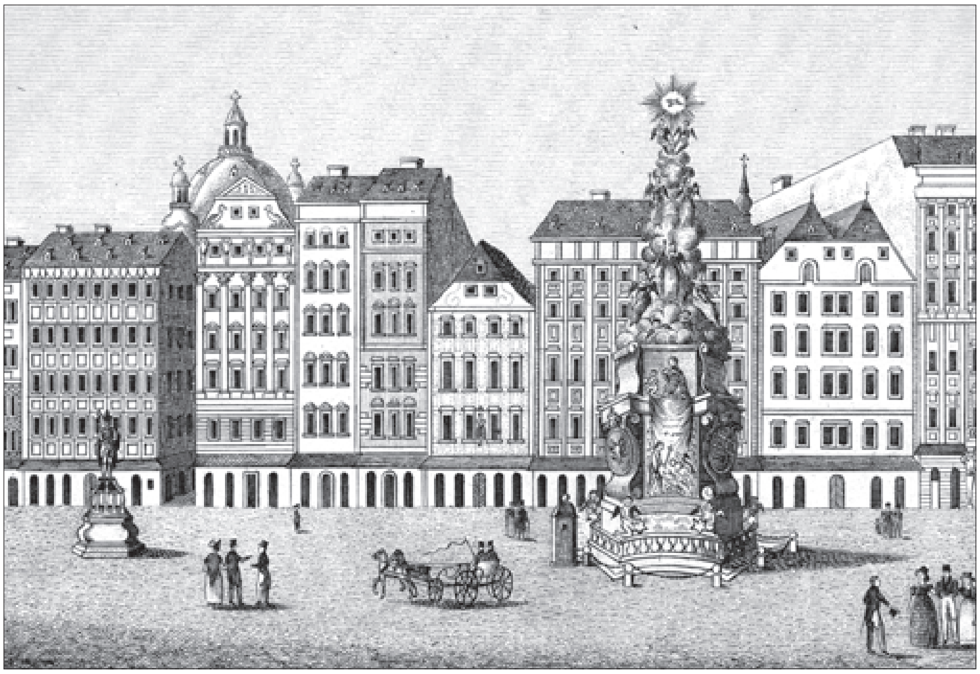
Careful planning to take account of seasonal closures enables us to provide a full programme of visits. There will be special arrangements to see places not generally accessible.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.00am from London Heathrow to Vienna. Drive to the city centre and check into the hotel. Take a mid-afternoon walk to the Stephansdom, the magnificent Gothic cathedral adorned with fine paintings and sculpture.

Day 2. Study the Hofburg, the vast Habsburg winter palace, an agglomeration of six centuries of building. Within the complex are the Great Hall of the library, one of the greatest of Baroque secular interiors, and the collection of precious regalia in the Treasury. Adjacent is the court church of St Augustine. Spend the afternoon in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, one of the world's most important art collections, particularly rich in Italian, Flemish and Dutch pictures. *Optional evening concert at the Wiener Konzerthaus with Wiener Symphoniker, Fabio Luisi (conductor), Lisa de la Salle (piano): Saint-Saens, Piano Concerto No.2 in G minor; Berlioz, 'Symphonie Fantastique'.*



Vienna, Graben, engraving c. 1830.

Day 3. Drive out to Schloss Schönbrunn, the 18th-century summer palace of the Habsburgs, one of the grandest in Europe with an unsurpassed set of Rococo interiors and extensive gardens. Return after lunch to the centre of Vienna for free time. *Evening opera at the Theater an der Wien:* ***L'Orfeo*** *(Monteverdi), Ivor Bolton (conductor), John Mark Ainsley (Orpheus), Marl Eriksmoen (Eurydice).*

Day 4. The magnificent Liechtenstein Palace was built at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries by the richest family in the Habsburg Empire and has recently reopened to display the princely art collection. Walk through some of the loveliest of Vienna's streets and squares, passing various imposing palaces and, on the Ringstrasse, the Gothic Revival Town Hall and the Neo-Classical Parliament. *Optional evening opera at the Vienna Volksoper:* ***Madame Butterfly*** *(Puccini), cast to be confirmed.*

Day 5. Visit the great hall of the Academy of Art and the contrasting Secession Building with Klimt's Beethoven Frieze. The Museum of Applied Art has international and Viennese collections, strikingly displayed, and the Baroque Jesuit church has outstanding illusionistic ceiling paintings. Christmas dinner. Opportunity to attend midnight mass.

Day 6, Christmas Day. Free morning: Mass at St Augustine's is recommended and some museums are open. Spend the afternoon in the Museumsquartier, a recently developed arts centre in the former imperial stables, whose most interesting museum is the Leopold Collection of Secessionist art. *Evening opera at the Volksoper:* ***Hänsel und Gretel*** *(Humperdinck), cast to be confirmed.*

Day 7. All-day coach excursion to the west of Vienna. Perched on an outcrop overlooking the Danube, Melk Abbey is one of the greatest accomplishments of Baroque architecture. A series of state apartments culminates in a church unsurpassed for richness of decoration. Visit the hospital church 'Am Steinhof', the most beautiful example of Secessionist art and architecture, recently reopened after restoration. *Evening opera at the Staatsoper:* ***The Marriage of Figaro*** *(Mozart), Adam Fischer (conductor), Adrian Eröd (Conte d'Almaviva), Christina Carvin (Contessa d'Almaviva).*

Day 8. Visit the Church of St Charles, the Baroque masterpiece of Fischer von Erlach. See the palace and garden of Schloss Belvedere, built on sloping ground overlooking Vienna for Prince Eugen of Savoy, constitute one of the finest residential complexes of the 18th century. It now houses the Museum of Austrian Art with paintings by Klimt and Schiele. Drive from here to the airport for the flight to London Heathrow, arriving c. 6.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,980 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Austrian Airways flights (Airbus 321); tickets to 3 performances; travel within Austria; accommodation; breakfasts, 2 lunches, 5 dinners; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £340. Price without flights £2,800.**

Hotel: a 5-star hotel on the Ringstrasse. All rooms are well equipped and most have a bath. There are two restaurants and a bar. Dinners are at the hotel and selected restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in museums, and navigation of metro and tram systems. Average distance by coach per day: 20 miles.

Music tickets: have not yet been confirmed.

Weather: temperatures may be below freezing on some days, especially in the morning, and snow is quite likely, but skies are likely to be clear for at least some of the time.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

KLIMT & SECESSIONIST VIENNA

1–5 June 2012 (MY 267)
5 days • £1,780
Lecturer: to be confirmed

A new tour for 2012.

Several exhibitions and displays of paintings and drawings by Gustav Klimt to commemorate the centenary of his death.

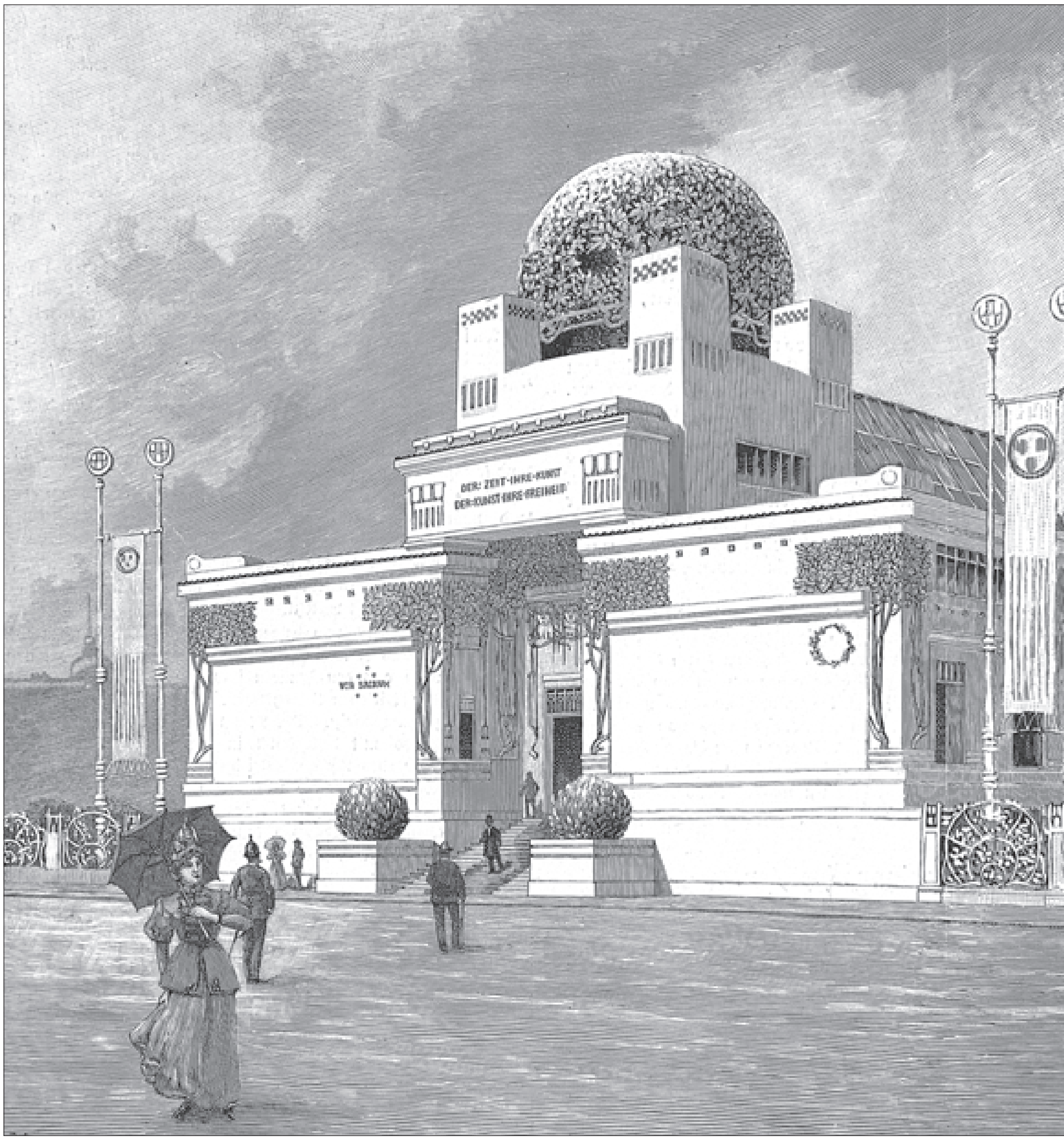
Walks and visits to see buildings, designs and artworks of the Vienna Secession, Art Nouveau, Arts & Crafts and the roots of Modernism.

Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century was a city in ferment – a bastion of the established order, a hotbed of radical politics, a crucible of intellectual and artistic revolution.

As capital of a multinational empire, residence of Europe's premier monarchy, centre of an omnipresent bureaucracy and headquarters of a formidable army, Vienna projected an image of unshakeable power and respect for tradition. Lift not the painted veil: behind lay widespread discontent, a crumbling moral order and myriad cracks in the coherence of empire. With remarkable suddenness, there emerged from this complacent, decadent and artistically stagnant society a brilliant array of artists and intellectuals who were determined to break with the past and were prepared to risk affronting the establishment in doing so.

This was the city of Mahler, Schönberg, Schnitzler and Freud; and also of the protagonists of this tour, Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, Kokoschka,

The Secession Building, wood engraving 1898, the year of its completion.

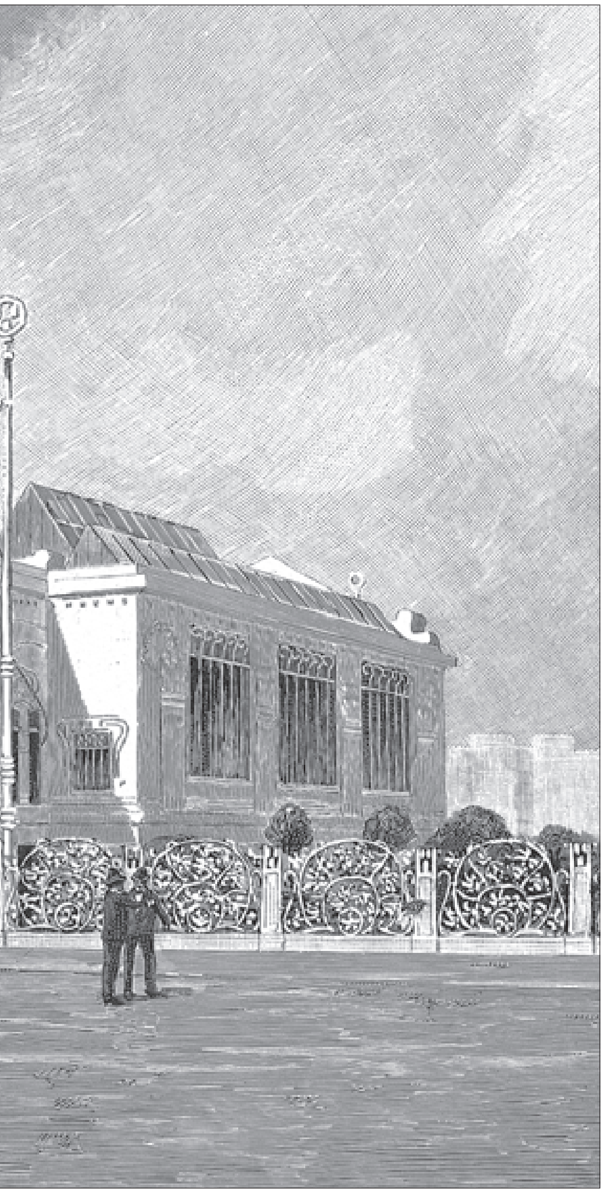


ART, ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Olbrich, Hoffmann and other artists who were associated with the 1897 'secession' from the Künstlerhaus, the conservative institution which hitherto had a virtual monopoly on exhibition space in Vienna.

In the 1890s, Art Nouveau in its multifarious manifestations spread like wildfire around Europe, and beyond. In the realm of architecture and ornamentation the Viennese variant was more measured than elsewhere and more classical. In the first years of the new century, applied ornament retreated further to expose pure form and rational design. Here are the roots of modernism which, in turn, became the dominant orthodoxy of the twentieth century.

By contrast, the revolution in painting and the graphic arts had little international influence but resulted in works which were exceptionally luxuriant and expressive. Klimt (1862–1912) was the leading exponent of the Viennese Secession. This tour is timed to include the maximum number of the exhibitions and displays of permanent holdings of his work which will be held to commemorate his centenary. Over the last three decades or so the Viennese Secessionists have gained tremendously in popularity; the highest price ever paid for a painting at auction, in 2006, was for a painting by Klimt.



Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 8.50am from London Heathrow to Vienna. Drive straight to the Gallery of Austrian Art in the Baroque magnificence of the Belvedere Palace to see the collection of paintings by Klimt – the world's largest, including *The Kiss* –, Schiele, Kokoschka and their contemporaries. All four nights are spent in Vienna.

Day 2. The Museum of Applied Arts has excellent collections, strikingly displayed, of work by Hoffmann, Moser and other designers of the Wiener Werkstätte, as well as by the Scotsman C.R. Mackintosh. There is an exhibition of Klimt's drawings for the Palais Stoclet. Drive to the outskirts to see buildings by Otto Wagner, the richly decorated apartment blocks in the Linke Wienzeile, the emperor's personal railway station at Schönbrunn and the recently restored Kirche am Steinhof, a hospital church of refulgent beauty incorporating many arts by many artists.

Day 3. The Museum of the History of Vienna, a fascinating survey whose collections are particularly rich in turn-of-the-century art and artefacts. For the first time, all their holdings of Klimt, including 400 works on paper as well as oils, will be on show. See also the decommissioned railway station pavilions by Wagner and Olbrich and the exhibition hall (the 'Golden Cabbage') designed in 1898 by Olbrich as an exhibition hall for the Secession. Klimt's 34-metre long *Beethoven Frieze* is here. The afternoon is free, with the option of a tour with a local guide of Vienna's inner city.

Day 4: A walk to see Secessionist designs by Otto Wagner, Max Fabiani, Josip Plecnik and Adolf Loos (including a public lavatory and a menswear shop) finishes at the Albertina, one of the world's greatest collections of drawings. Here is an exhibition of its drawings by Klimt augmented by loans. The Burgtheater, pre-eminent theatre in the German speaking world, has a ceiling partly painted by Klimt and recently discovered sketches for the project. The Leopold Collection, opened in 2001, is an excellent collection of works by Secessionist artists, especially Schiele. There is a special Klimt exhibition focusing on his travels.

Day 5. The Theatre Museum in the Lobkowitz Palace has an exhibition around Klimt's painting *Nuda Veritas*. From there, walk to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, one of the world's greatest art galleries. There are paintings by Klimt as part of the decorative scheme of the stairhall. Time for independent exploration of the permanent collection. The flight to Heathrow arrives at c. 6.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,780 (deposit: £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Austrian Airlines flights (Airbus 320); travel by private coach for the airport transfers and on one other occasion and by U-Bahn and tram; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; admission charges for all included visits to museums; all tips for waiters, hotel staff, drivers, etc; all airport and state taxes; services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £190**. **Price without flights £1,570.**

Hotel: a 4-star hotel belonging to an international chain, well located on the Ringstrasse. Decor is traditional. Dinners are at selected restaurants.

Optional music: details of performances that coincide with this tour will be circulated nearer the time.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour. Public transport, metro or tram will be used on some occasions. Average distance by coach per day: 6 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

MODERN ART & ARCHITECTURE

Danish Art & Design............................25
The History of Impressionism...............40
Cézanne in Paris..................................44
Matisse & his world..............................45
Modern Art on the Côte d'Azur...........52
Norway: art, architecture, landscape ..131
Moore & Hepworth 195
Frank Lloyd Wright 197

OPERETTA IN AUSTRIA

A LIVING TRADITION

July or August 2012

Details available in October 2011.
Register your interest now.

Though operetta is identifiable as a distinct genre of music theatre in Paris in the 1850s and largely the creation of Jacques Offenbach, its most glittering, enduring and widely-loved manifestations were created in Vienna and the Habsburg Empire from the 1870s to the 1920s. This tour provides an intense and authentic dose of operetta in its Austrian heartland, where the art form in its traditional guise is still very much part of the living culture.

This tour will be pieced together from the offerings of the leading four or five different operetta festivals, once their programmes have been announced. The itinerary here is based on the 2011 festivals.

Please let us know if you would like to receive the details as soon as they are ready.

Sample itinerary (as run in 2011)

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.00pm from Heathrow to Munich and continue by coach to Bad Ischl. Two nights are spent here.

Day 2: Bad Ischl. Visit to the Kaiservilla, still the private property of a Habsburg. The Kongress- und Theaterhaus is the venue for ***Im weißen Rössl (White Horse Inn)*** by Ralph Benatzky, the last great composer of operetta, with contributions by Robert Stolz (1930).

Day 3: Dürnstein, Baden. Drive from Bad Ischl to Baden bei Wien, digressing for lunch at Dürnstein. In Baden, settle into the hotel before a talk and a pre-theatre supper. Performance in the late 19th-century Sommerarena of ***Boccaccio*** by Franz von Suppé (1879). Overnight Baden bei Wien.

Day 4: Baden, Mörbisch. Baden bei Wien was once a major health resort, among whose lowlier habitués were Mozart and Beethoven. Located on the Neusiedlersee, a lake whose shores are Austrian on one side and Hungarian on the other, the festival at the open-air theatre is an authentic institution with spectacular productions on an enormous stage. We see no less a masterpiece than ***Der Zigeunerbaron*** (*The Gypsy Baron,* Johann Strauss II, 1885). Overnight Baden bei Wien.

Day 5: Baden. Reached on foot from the hotel through a park and rose garden, Baden is a charming town in which to wander and relax, largely Biedermeier in style (early 19th-century soft-core classicism) with galleries and cafés, alleys and squares. Vienna is only an hour away by tram. On the cusp between *opéra-comique* and operetta, ***Der Verschwender*** (*The Spendthrift*) by Conradin Kreutzer with a libretto by Ferdinand Raimund (1834) is a delight, a sort of music hall Schubert.

Day 6. After a leisurely start, fly from Vienna to London Heathrow, arriving c. 3.30pm.

THE SCHUBERTIADE

June & September 2012
Register your interest now.

The combination of music-making of the highest quality with a pre-Alpine mountain setting is a heady mix. Devotees of the Schubertiade return year after year; addiction is a distinct possibility. Add a great art collection or two and visits to picturesque towns and top up with relaxation among ravishing upland scenery and this begins to sound like the recipe for the perfect holiday. For keen walkers we are offering a tour in June where guided walks in the hills are an integral part of the tour.

The annual Schubertiade in the Vorarlberg is one of the most prestigious and enjoyable music festivals in Europe. It attracts artists of the highest calibre, while the rural setting and the predominance of Schubertian music create an endearing informality and intimacy.

Having started in the village of Hohenems, it migrated a few years later up the valley to the little town of Feldkirch, which in 2001 it abandoned in favour of mountain villages amidst the beautiful scenery of the Bregenzerwald. The hill village setting recently has been further refined by confining all the concerts to Schwarzenberg, described by Herder as the prettiest village in Europe.

Our tours are based in the neighbouring village of Mellau, eight miles away. It is an excellent base for hill walking, and guided walks are an integral part of the June tour. On the September tour, there is a programme of visits to nearby towns and art galleries. Always there is plenty of time for relaxation between the concerts and excursions or the walks.

HAYDN IN EISENSTADT

September 2012

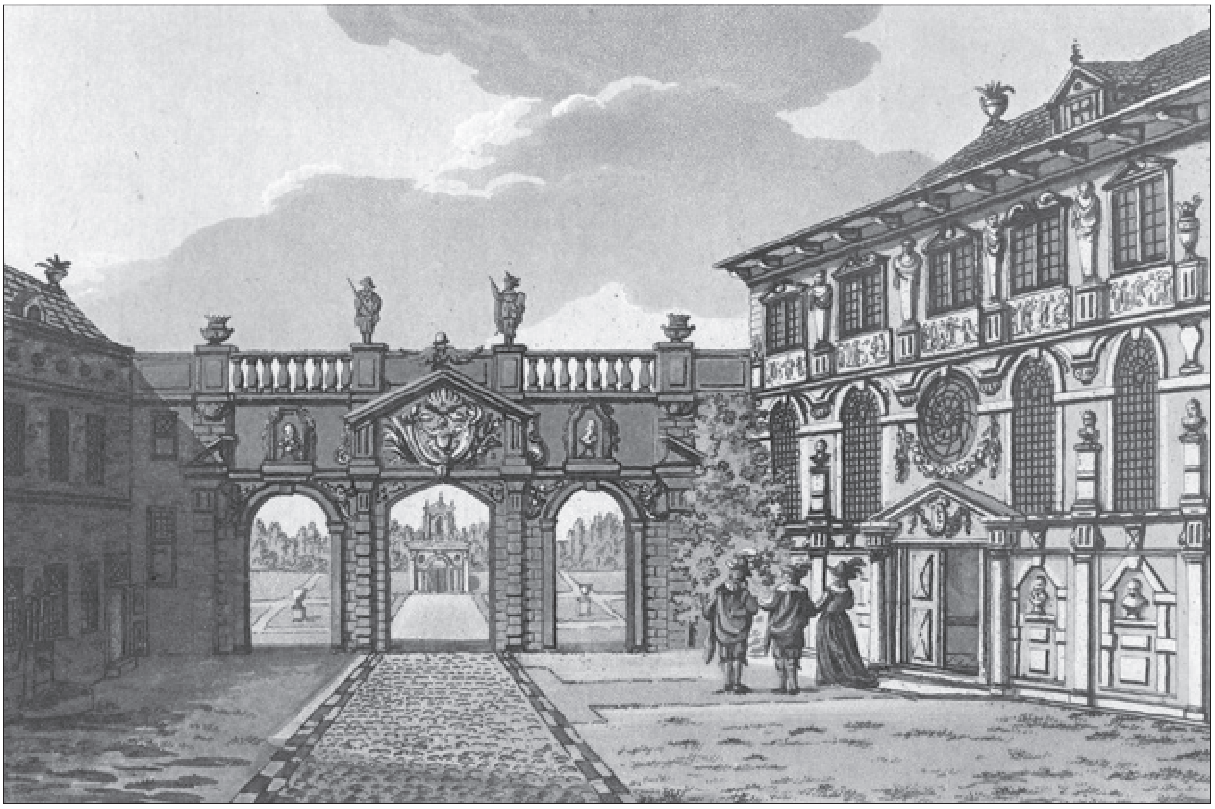
Details available in October 2011.
Register your interest now.

The international festival in the small country town where Haydn was based for most of his career. Visits to other places associated with Haydn are included, including the great summer palace in Hungary.

Left: from a Bavarian cartoon of 1910.

FLEMISH PAINTING

FROM VAN EYCK TO VAN DYCK



Antwerp, Rubens's House, aquatint c. 1830 after a 17th-century drawing.

25–29 April 2012 (MY 228)
5 days • £1,540
Lecturer: to be confirmed

11–15 July 2012 (MY 303)
5 days • £1,540
Lecturer: Clare Ford-Wille

Short, sharp immersion in some brilliant painting and beautiful old cities; a classic art history tour.

Visits the main centres: Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Louvain and Brussels.

Hotel in Ghent, which is equidistant from the other cities, cutting travelling time.

First-class travel by Eurostar from London.

Few travellers are aware just how attractive and unspoilt are the ancient cities of Flanders, or how glorious are the paintings of the Flemish school when displayed in their original environment.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp and Brussels were among the most prosperous and progressive cities in Europe. Though ruled successively by two of the most illustrious European dynasties – the Burgundian dukes of Burgundy and the House of Habsburg – these great cities were virtually independent. Their flourishing cultural life sustained one of the most brilliant episodes in the history of art.

The Golden Age of Flemish painting was inaugurated at the beginning of the fifteenth century by the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck, whose consummate skill with the new art of oil painting resulted in pictures which have never been surpassed for their jewel-like brilliance and breathtaking naturalism.

The tradition of exquisite workmanship was continued with the same tranquillity of spirit by such masters as Hans Memling in Bruges and with greater emotionalism by Rogier van der Weyden in Brussels and Hugo van der Goes in Ghent. Hieronymus Bosch was an individualist who specialized in the depiction of diabolical nastiness. The sixteenth century saw a shift towards mannerist displays of virtuoso skill and spiritual tension, though the outstanding painter of the century was another individualist, Pieter Bruegel.

A magnificent culmination was reached in the seventeenth century with Peter Paul Rubens, the greatest painter of the Baroque age. His works are of an unsurpassed vitality and painted with a breadth and bravura which exploited to the utmost the potential of the technique of oil painting.

Itinerary

Day 1: Louvain, Ghent. Depart at c. 11.00am from London St Pancras by Eurostar to Brussels. Drive to the university city of Louvain, In St Peter, in the chapel for which it was painted, is the marvellous *Institution of the Sacrament* by Dirch Bouts. Walk around the old centre, including the splendid gothic town hall and peaceful Béguinage (religious community). Drive to Ghent for dinner. Stay in Ghent for all four nights.

Day 2: Ghent, Bruges. Visit the great altarpiece in the cathedral of Ghent, the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* by Hubert and Jan van Eyck, one of the greatest masterpieces of the Flemish School. Walk around the attractive historic centre, passing canals, guild halls and the castle. In Bruges see the Gothic Church of Our Lady, housing tombs of the Valois dukes and Michelangelo's marble Madonna and Child and the Groeninge Museum which has a wonderful collection of paintings by Van Eyck and other Bruges painters.

Day 3: Antwerp. The great port on the Scheldt has an abundance of historic buildings in the old centre, and possesses museums and churches of the highest interest. Three of Rubens's most powerful paintings are in the vast Gothic cathedral. The Royal Museum of

Fine Arts is closed for renovation until 2017. However, highlights of its impressive collection are on display in the cathedral, and in the recently opened Museum van der Stroom, a striking new structure of red stone and curved glass panels. See also the house and studio Rubens built for himself and the Mayer van der Bergh Museum which has a small but outstanding collection including works by Bruegel.

Day 4: Bruges. With its extensive and highly picturesque streetscape constructed of melancholy dark red brick, Bruges is the loveliest of Netherlandish cities. The mediaeval Hospital of St John is now a museum devoted to Hans Memling and contains many of his best paintings. See the market place with its soaring belfry, Gothic town hall and Basilica of the Holy Blood. Return to Ghent in time to see the Bosch paintings at the Fine Arts Museum.

Day 5: Brussels. Rising to prominence later than the other cities and thriving in the 19th and 20th centuries, Brussels nevertheless retains splendid palaces and guildhouses around the Grand Place. The Fine Arts Museum is one of the best in Europe, and presents the most comprehensive of all collections of Netherlandish painting as well as international works (the 19th- and 20th-century collections are currently closed for renovation but are due to re-open in February 2012). Take the Eurostar from Brussels to London St Pancras, arriving c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,540 (deposit £200). This includes: rail travel (first class, standard premier) on Eurostar; private coach for transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; cold snacks and drinks on the Eurostar; all admissions to museums, etc. visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £230. Price without rail travel by Eurostar £1,390.**

Hotel: all nights are spent in Ghent in a comfortable 4-star hotel, excellently located beside the town hall. Rooms are well-equipped and all have double beds (there are no twins). Included dinners are in good restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of standing in museums and walking on this tour, often on cobbled or roughly paved streets. Average distance by coach per day: 63 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 19 participants.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

WITH CRÉCY & AGINCOURT

2–6 July 2012 (MY 299)
5 days • £1,750
Lecturer: Major Gordon Corrigan

A study of the most written-about battle in history, and of one of the best-preserved battlefields.

Prefaced by visits to Crécy and Agincourt.

The Battle of Waterloo in 1815 terminated twenty-three years of fighting which were at least as deadly as the First World War, and ushered in ninety-nine years of relative peace and political equilibrium. Waterloo can also be seen as marking Great Britain's coming of age as a superpower. As an ingredient in British self-identity, the event became absolutely key, epitomising the championship of liberty over tyranny, victory of the weaker over the stronger, and the virtues of courage, composure, perseverance and discipline.

Despite its far-reaching consequences, Waterloo was very far from being the biggest battle of the Napoleonic Wars, or the bloodiest, or even, in terms of imbalance of battlefield casualties, the most decisive. It was not even a particularly British victory – two-thirds of the allied army was German, Dutch and Belgian, and that is without including the Prussians, whose intervention late in the day ensured allied success. Much of the enduring fascination of the battle – probably the most written-about in history – derives from the controversies which surround it and because it was 'the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life'.

Wellington's 'infamous army', though of similar size to Napoleon's, contained a high proportion of inexperienced troops and citizen militia, and some who only a year previously had been marching under the imperial eagle. For much of the day the battle seemed to be going France's way, but the allies fought heroically, or rather stood their ground tenaciously. This was Wellington's ultimate test, his chance to measure his abilities against Napoleon, whom he had never met in battle before. And his generalship proved to be the superior.

The unpredictability of the outcome, the well-honed tactics, the extraordinary bravery and gallantry and the unprecedented quantity of eye-witness accounts make Waterloo particularly rewarding to study, and it is wonderfully fortuitous that the terrain is so well preserved.

Amazingly, this is also the case with Crécy (1346) and Agincourt (1415), also scenes of British victories over superior French forces. Likewise, they are major ingredients in the fading national myth. But it is not jingoism which brings these three battles together in this tour, but the contingency of geographical proximity – that and their fame. As a trio of events in British (pre-Victorian) history, their combined resonance is unsurpassed. A proper study of the battlefields leaves little room for partiality; 'Nothing except a battle lost can be half so melancholy as a battle won.'

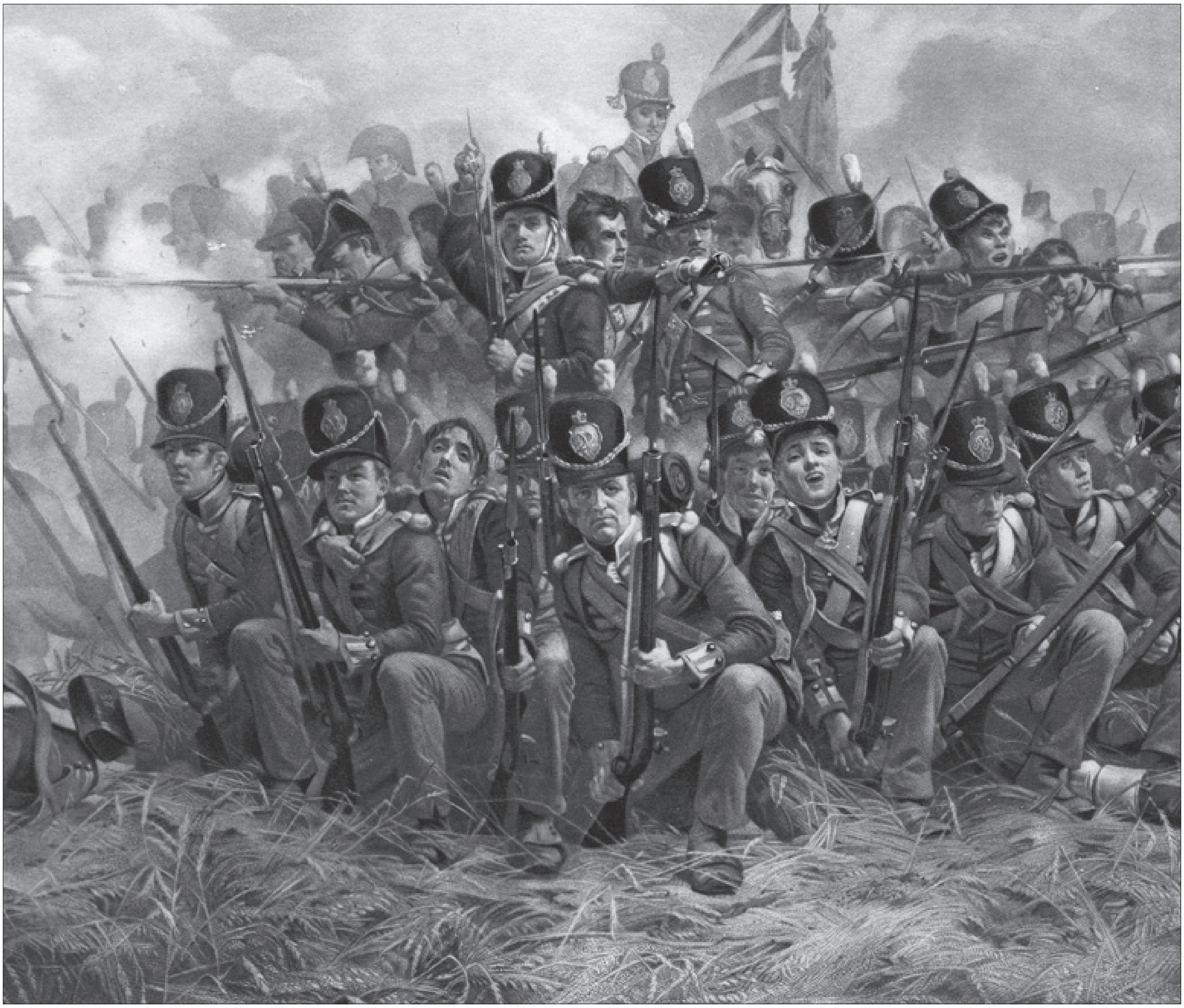
Itinerary

Day 1: Crécy. Take the Eurostar at 11.00am from St Pancras to Calais-Fréthun. Drive south through rolling countryside to the village of Crécy-en-Ponthieu. It was here in August 1346 that an English army commanded by Edward III and the Black Prince inflicted a crushing defeat on a numerically superior French and international force, victory of the longbow over knights in armour. The battlefield has changed little in topography and planting in 650 years. Overnight Montreuil.

Day 2: Agincourt. Similarly remote and rural the little-altered terrain helps explain how Henry V and his exhausted followers brought catastrophe to the much larger French army. The traditional national myth, complete with Shakespearean spin, is marred by the reality of English brutality. After a brief visit to the visitors' centre have lunch in the vicinity before driving across Flemish France and Walloon Belgium to Waterloo. First of three nights in Waterloo.

Day 3: Quatre Bras, Ligny. The Wellington Museum is in the inn where the Duke spent the nights before and after the battle. During the day of 16th June some of the scattered allied contingents converged at Quatre Bras and achieved a Pyrrhic victory but numerical inferiority forced an orderly withdrawal, admirably screened on the 17th by cavalry. At the same time a much bigger battle was taking place 7 miles to the East at Ligny where the Prussians were badly defeated by Napoleon; this proved to be his last victory. Overnight Waterloo.

Day 4: Waterloo. All day is spent walking the battlefield, with stops for talks at key positions. Among the highlights are the farmstead of Hougoumont, held by the Guards throughout the day during the fiercest fighting, and the sweep of terrain across which the British cavalry ('the noblest in Europe, but the worst led') drove back the advance of the French but exhausted themselves in the process. There is the option of visiting the 1912 panoramic painting and climbing the Lion Mound. Finish the day by walking the course taken by Napoleon's Guards towards the allied lines before turning and fleeing in the face of deadly



'Quatre Bras', the afternoon of June 16th 1815, detail of a lithograph after the painting by Lady Butler.

fire and bayonet charges. Overnight Waterloo.

Day 5: Plancenoit, Waterloo. Prussian troops entered the village of Plancenoit south of the battlefield and soaked up Napoleon's reserves; the fighting was so fierce that little of the village survives. Visit the Napoleon museum in the house where he spent the night before the fateful battle. Return to London by Eurostar from Brussels arriving St Pancras c.5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,750 (deposit £200). This includes: return rail travel (first class, standard premier) on Eurostar London St Pancras to Calais (lunch included), Brussels to London; travel by private coach within France and Belgium; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and all four dinners with wine, water and coffee, plus meals on Eurostar; admission to battlefields, museums etc. visited with the group; gratuities for drivers, restaurant staff; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £210** (double room for sole use). **Price without rail travel £1,550.**

Hotel: in Montreuil (1 night): a 19th-century building in the centre of Montreuil converted into a 3-star hotel. Superior bedrooms are of a good size, the décor is modern. In Waterloo (3 nights): located close to the battlefield, this 4-star hotel is in a converted 19th-century sugar refinery. Rooms are elegant and spacious.

How strenuous? There is a lot of standing on exposed sites for extended periods of time. There is quite a lot of walking, the Waterloo day having about five miles on foot along country lanes, footpaths and fields. There is a long drive from Agincourt to Waterloo.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

CZECH MUSIC IN BRNO & PRAGUE

DVOŘÁK, JANÁČEK, SMETANA

9–14 May 2012 (MY 238)
6 days • £2,180
(with tickets to 4 performances)
Lecturer: Professor Jan Smaczny

In Brno: *Rusalka* (Dvořák) and *The Bartered Bride* (Smetana).

In Prague: *Katya Kabanova* (Janáček) at the National Theatre and *Má vlast* (Smetana) at the Obecní dům (Municipal House).

Led by a musicologist.

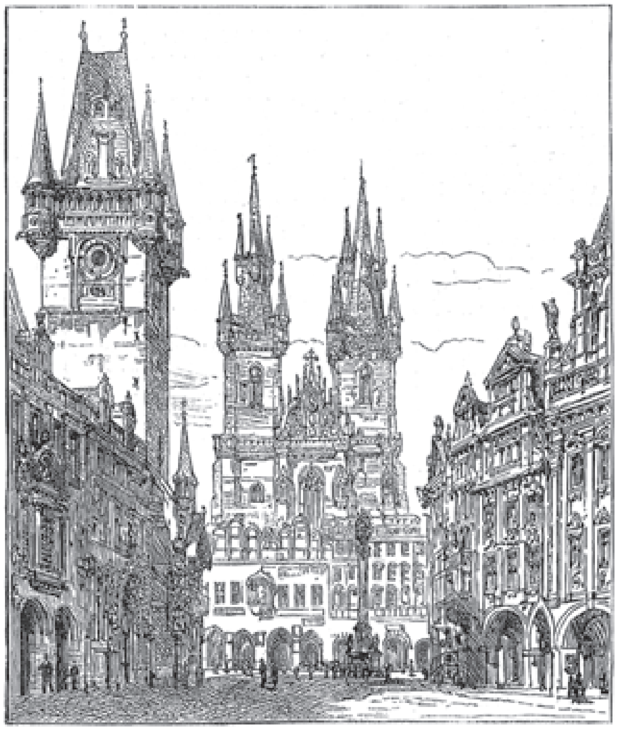
Walks, talks and free time between performances.

Prague and Brno are two of the great operatic capitals of Europe. Even before Mozart's legendary visits to Prague to oversee performances of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and the premières of *Don Giovanni* and *La Clemenza di Tito*, there were signs of operatic life, notably in Count Nostitz's exquisitely proportioned theatre, later renamed the Estates Theatre when it was sold to the citizens of Prague.

Through much of the nineteenth century, this theatre was home to German opera in the Czech capital. Later, as the national revival gathered pace, the Czech-speaking population of Prague wanted a theatre of their own and in 1862 opened the handsome, though rather cramped, Provisional Theatre. This estimable building, which saw the premières of all but one of Smetana's operas, was spectacularly replaced by the National Theatre in 1881. Rebuilt in 1883 after a fire, the building is a temple to the Czech nation. The sumptuous auditorium is dominated by a proscenium crowned with the proud inscription that this was a gift from 'the nation to itself'.

Brno, historic and beautiful capital of Moravia, was for much of his life the home of the Czech Republic's greatest twentieth-century composer, Leos Janáček. The Janáček Theatre, purpose-built for opera, was opened in 1965 and is a superb venue for a wide variety of operatic styles. Dvořák's supremely lyrical *Rusalka* is arguably his greatest and certainly his best loved opera.

The tour is led by a musicologist who gives talks on each opera. As with many of our music tours, the performances are interspersed with a gentle programme of visits and walks.



Prague, Tyn Church, wood engraving 1881.

Itinerary

Day 1: Brno. Fly at c. 9.45am from London Heathrow to Vienna. Drive to the hotel in Brno arriving in time for dinner. First of three nights in Brno.

Day 2: Brno. The present capital of Moravia, Brno has a wealth of Gothic and Baroque churches, and fine architecture of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. See the mediaeval town hall, the outstanding Gothic church of St James, the Baroque Minorite church and the Fine Arts Museum. After a free afternoon, *evening opera at the Janáček Theatre:* ***Rusalka*** *(Dvořák), Jaroslav Kyzlink (conductor), Karine Guizzo (director), Orchestra of the Janacek Theatre Brno Opera, Pavla Vykopalová (Rusalka), Peter Berger (Prince), Jiří Sulženko (Water Sprite), Denisa Hamarová (Witch).*

Day 3: Brno. Housed in three different branches, the Moravian Gallery (Moravská galerie) includes the Museum of Applied Arts, the Pražák Palace and Governor's Place. *Evening opera at the Janáček Theatre:* ***The Bartered Bride*** *(Smetana), Jaroslav Kyzlink (conductor), Ondřej Havelka (director), Orchestra of the Janacek Theatre Brno Opera, Pavla Vykopalová (Mařenka), Peter Berger (Jeník), Martin Gurbaľ (Kecal), Zoltán Korda (Vašek).*

Day 4: Brno, Prague. Drive to Prague (c. 130 miles on motorway) arriving in time for lunch at the hotel. In the afternoon, visit the Dvořák museum in the Vila Amerika, an 18th century baroque house. *Evening opera at the National Theatre:* ***Katya Kabanova*** *(Janáček) Orchestra and chorus of the National Theatre Opera, Robert Jindra (conductor), Robert Wilson (director), Luděk Vele (Savjol Prokofjevič Dikoj), Tomáš Juhás (Boris Grigorjevič), Yvona Škvárová (Marfa Ignatevna Kabanova).* First of two nights in Prague.

Day 5: Prague. A private visit of the Estates Theatre, originally the Nostitz Theatre, one of the finest Neoclassical buildings in Prague, intimately associated with Mozart. Walk down through the Lesser Town below the castle, passing St Nicholas, one of the most glorious of Baroque churches. Cross the Vltava River via the Charles Bridge, the finest mediaeval structure of its kind. *Evening concert at the Obecní dům:* ***Má vlast*** *(Smetana) with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vasily Petrenko.*

Day 6: Prague. The 16th-century Lobkowicz palace, recently re-opened with the family's collection of old master paintings, including two views of London by Canaletto, and several 16th-century Spanish paintings. Fly from Prague to London, arriving at Heathrow at c. 8.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,180 (deposit £200). This includes: tickets to 4 performances costing c. £180; air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 320, Airbus 321); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners (including one light dinner) with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and Czech guide-interpreter. **Single supplement £285** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,040.**

Hotels. In Brno: originally an exclusive apartment block in Brno in the 19th century and now converted into a contemporary 4-star hotel. All rooms have air conditioning, a safe, a minibar and free wireless internet. There is a restaurant. In Prague: 5-star hotel built in 1904 that retains the Art Nouveau theme throughout. Comfortable and elegant but not fussy with a good restaurant and café. Very well located in the Old Town close to Obecní dům (Municipal House).

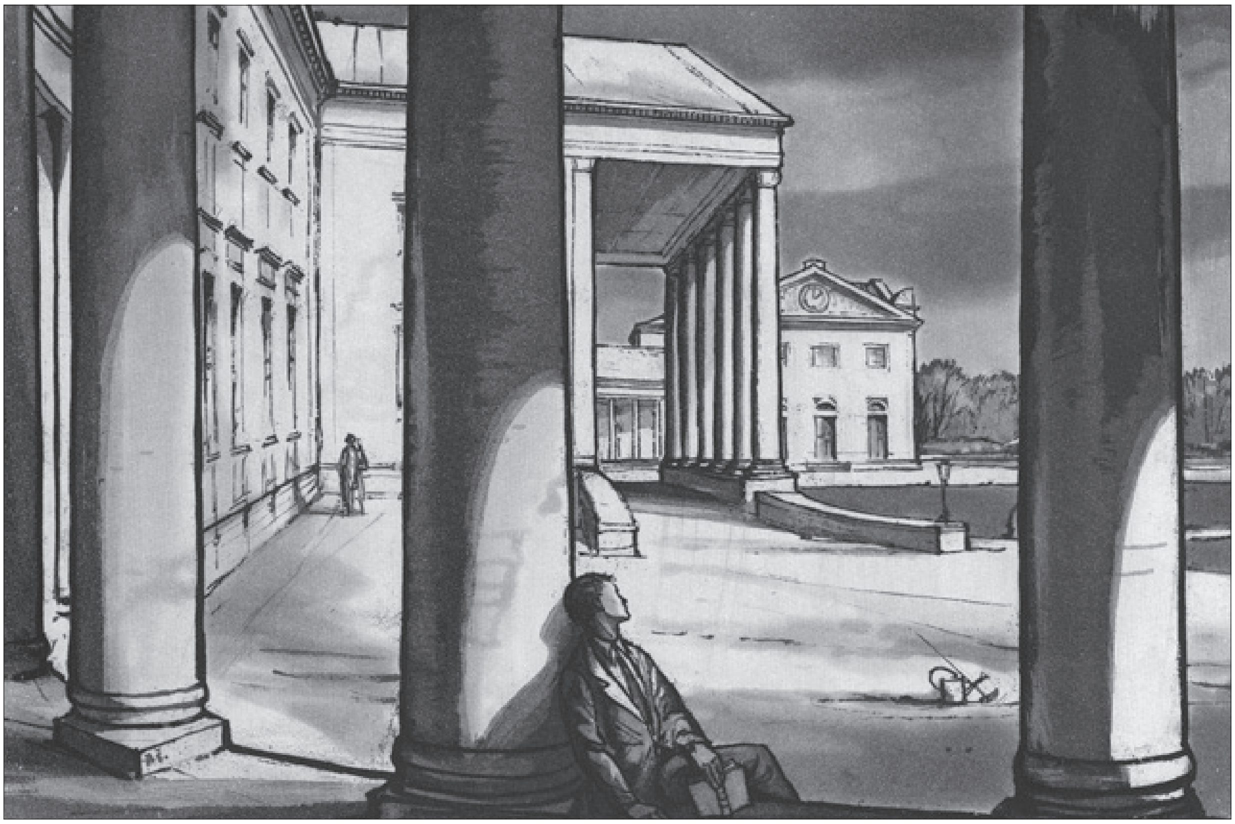
Music tickets are not confirmed until January 2012.

How strenuous? A fair amount of walking, some on roughly paved, steep streets, and we walk c. 20 minutes to the opera houses. Although there is free time before each performance, this is quite a busy tour. Average distance by coach per day: 38 miles.

Small group: 10 to 22 participants.

BOHEMIA

ART, ARCHITECTURE, HISTORY & LANDSCAPE AT THE HEART OF EUROPE



Kačina, aquatint c. 1930 by Tavik Frantisek Simon.

17–24 September 2012 (MY 378)
8 days • £2,630
Lecturer: Michael Ivory

A selection of the finest places with the most densely packed heritage in Central Europe.

Beautiful historic town centres, architecture from Gothic to Art Nouveau, distinctive Bohemian schools of painting and sculpture.

Passes through enchanting, rolling countryside.

Can be combined with 'Connoisseur's Prague'.

Draw two lines across a map of Europe, from Inverness to Istanbul and from Málaga to Moscow: the place where they cross is Bohemia. The heart of Europe thus crudely determined turns out to be a region whose exact whereabouts and current political description may challenge not a few of you, dear readers, and which is synonymous with a decorously dissolute lifestyle.

Yet there were times when Bohemia was a significant European power, enjoyed a thriving economy and marched in the vanguard of political, social and cultural developments. (In one of these expansionist moments, over three hundred years before *A Winter's Tale,* it acquired a coast.) But Fate seems to have decreed that each rise was soon to be followed by a fall. The most recent was a double fall – dismemberment and desecration by the Nazis was followed by a forty-year incarceration behind the Iron Curtain.

Paradoxically, Communist rule helped to preserve a wonderful architectural patrimony, the most abundant in Central Europe. Ideologically inspired contempt for and neglect of its heritage was constrained by lack of means to modernise, rebuild or demolish (thanks to a baleful economic model), a mixture that acted like a mildly corrosive aspic: there was deterioration but little destruction. But since the Velvet Revolution of 1989, a surge of restoration and rehabilitation has transformed both the architectural set pieces and the humbler buildings. The built environment and the art of Bohemia have never looked better.

There are towns with streets and squares with facades from every century from the fifteenth to the early twentieth; a remarkable variety of castles and country houses, most retaining fine furnishings and pictures; magnificent churches and abbeys, mediaeval and Baroque; distinctive works of art in excellent galleries. And the landscape is enchanting, mostly gently hilly, sometimes rugged, much of it wooded interspersed with fertile fields of pasture or arable, large tracts surprisingly empty. The River Vltava is a recurring feature, cutting a curvaceous course from south to north, and so are the many small lakes, most formed in the Middle Ages for the cultivation of fish.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Prague. Drive to a country house hotel near Liblice where there is time to settle in and for an introductory talk before dinner. The next three nights are spent here.

Day 2: Kutná Hora, Kačina. In the Middle Ages, the silver mines at Kutná Hora made the city wealthy. Now a small provincial town of great charm, it possesses a wonderful cathedral, perhaps the finest Gothic building in Central Europe, the creation sequentially of Bohemia's two finest mediaeval architects. Set in a landscaped park, the country house at Kačina is a marvellous classical design of the early 19th century with a circular library, theatre and a sequence of fine rooms. Overnight Liblice.

Day 3: Nelahozeves, etc. Nelahozeves is a magnificent house of the mid-16th century, externally retaining the aspect of a fortress but internally embodying Italianate Renaissance elegance. Restituted to the Lobkowicz family, the furnishings and works of art are excellent. Dvořák's birthplace museum is in the village. Two other country seats are visited today but at the time of writing we are awaiting confirmation from private owners before we make the final choice. Overnight Liblice.

Day 4: Karlštejn, Orlik, Zvikov. Drive to South Bohemia via three castles. Karlštejn was built by Emperor Charles IV, whose reign (1346–78) saw Bohemia reach its apogee. A chapel embedded in the impregnable keep, with its walls of semi-precious stones, gilded vault and 130 panel paintings is the most opulent surviving mediaeval interior. Above the confluence of two gorges, Zvikov has a unique two-storey, 13th-century arcaded courtyard. Orlik Castle was domesticated in post-mediaeval times and has a fine collection of French empire furniture. First of three nights in Hluboká and Vltavou.

Day 5: Hluboká, Ceský Krumlov. Summer home of the Schwazenbergs, dominant dynasty of South Bohemia, the Gothic Revival mansion of Hluboká is sumptuously furnished. The adjacent state art collection has good mediaeval and 20th-century Czech works. Clustered around a bend in the upper reaches of the Vltava, Ceský Krumlov is a highly picturesque little town. The hilltop castle was largely rebuilt in the 16th and 18th centuries; among its treasures are a hall painted with masked revellers, an excellently preserved theatre and a formal garden. *Tickets may be available for a performance of an opera in the Baroque theatre. Please enquire.* Overnight Hluboká.

Day 6: Jindřichuv Hradec, Třebon, Zlatá Koruna. Jindřichuv Hradec is a pretty little town whose extensive aristocratic residence is notable for its Renaissance parts, in particular a beautiful rotunda. At the heart of a district of lakes formed in the Middle Ages to cultivate fish, Třebon is another delightful little town, still partly walled. Zlatá Koruna is a Cistercian monastery with a fine 13th-century chapter house and Baroque halls. Overnight Hluboká.

Day 7: Kratochvile, Plzeň, Kladruby. Secluded within a walled garden amid particularly lovely countryside, Kratochvile is the finest Renaissance villa in the country. Continue to West Bohemia. The centre of the city of Plzeň adheres to its 13th-century grid plan; Gothic cathedral, the world’s third largest synagogue (1880s), good art gallery and varied street frontages. The Baroque-Gothic monastery church at Kladruby (1720s) is a masterpiece by Bohemia’s most original architect, Giovanni Santini. Overnight Mariánské Lázny.

Day 8: Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad). For most of the 19th century and into the 20th, Marienbad was one of Europe’s most fashionable spas, with patronage from monarchs (Edward VII) to mavericks (Marx, Chopin, Wagner). White, yellow and ochre, from serene classicism to riotous ‘Renaissance’, the hotels and spas gather around a lovely landscaped park. Fly from Prague Airport, arriving Heathrow c. 5.00pm.

The coach continues to Prague with anyone who is combining this tour with Connoisseur’s Prague, which begins tomorrow. You have 24 hours in Prague before that tour (staying at the tour’s hotel). You can choose to be independent or to join a morning tour with a local guide of Prague Castle and the cathedral.

Practicalities

Price: £2,630 (deposit: £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 320); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, six dinners and three lunches with wine, water and coffee; admission charges for all museums and places visited; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer and local guide. **Single supplement £120. Price without flights £2,480.**

Hotels. Near Liblice, 40 km north of Prague (3 nights): a recently opened 4-star hotel and conference centre converted from an 18th-cent. country house, charming and well run. In Hluboká nad Vltavou (3 nights): a 4-star hotel converted from an auxiliary building belonging to the neighbouring mansion, lavishly and characterfully decorated. In Mariánské Lazné (1 night): a modern hotel in the centre of town, and though adequately comfortable this may disappoint after the other two (few hotels here take bookings for less than 7 nights).

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour, some of it up slopes or up steps (250 steps are climbed during the visit to Karlstejn for example). To be able to enjoy the tour it would be essential to manage daily walking and stair-climbing without any difficulties. Average distance by coach per day: 104 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Connoisseur’s Prague

25 Sept.–1 Oct. 2012 (mz 380)
Lecturer: Michael Ivory

Full details available in September 2011. Contact us now to register interest.

Concentrates on the less-visited and less accessible places in this endlessly fascinating and beautiful city, while not ignoring the main items.

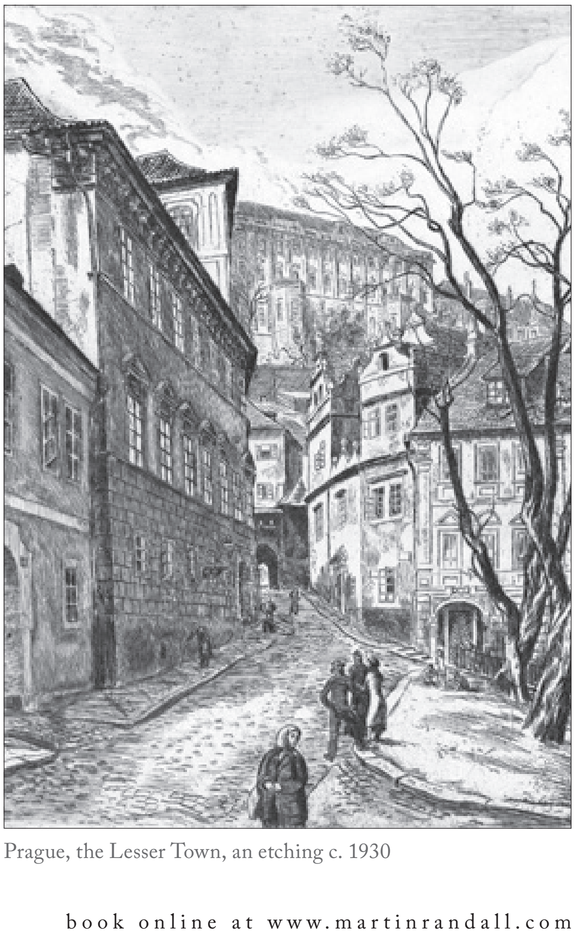
Special arrangements and private visits are a feature.

Museums and art galleries have been transformed in recent years, and new ones added. Prague’s wonderful riches are now shown as never before.

There is a particular focus on Czech art, architecture and design from the late 19th century to the 1930s. Alfons Mucha’s ‘Slav Epic’ will be displayed in Prague for the first time.

Prague-based curators and experts are being engaged to supplement the input of the lecturer.

Can be combined with Bohemia, 17–24 September 2012, see above.



Prague, the Lesser Town, an etching c. 1930

DANISH ART & DESIGN

COPENHAGEN
ZEALAND
FUNEN
JUTLAND

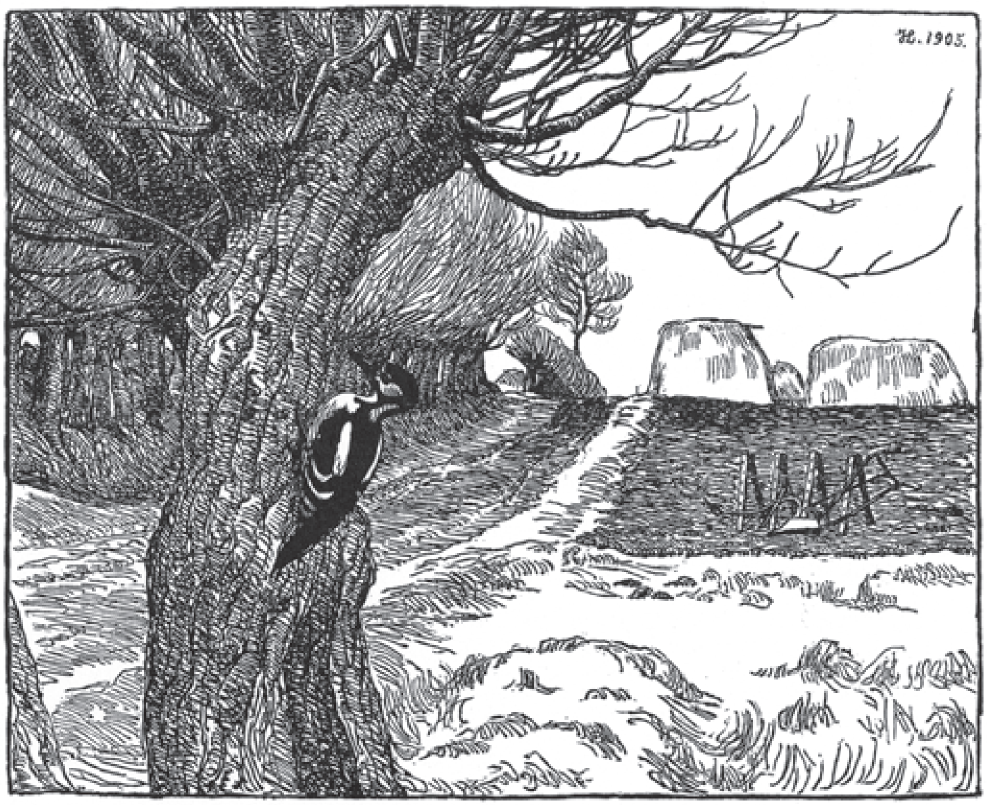
28 June–5 July 2012 (MY 297)
8 days • £3,060
Lecturer: Dr Shona Kallestrup

A range of excellent art galleries, many with exciting new buildings or fine settings, showing international as well as Danish art.

Focus on Danish painting of the 19th and early 20th centuries, especially the Golden Age.

Historic and modern architecture, city and provinces, town and country.

Aspects of design in everyday life.



Woodcut by Johannes Larsen 1905.

Memorable museums, great art both international and Danish, historic architecture and modern design; and while focusing on the visual arts, this tour does provide the opportunity to gain a wider understanding of the history and culture of Denmark. Diversity is augmented by visiting a selection of provincial towns as well as the capital, and by journeying through the countryside and seeing the sea.

A major theme is Danish painting of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Occasional exhibitions grant British gallery-goers a glimpse of this phenomenon, but its full glory can only be seen in the land of its origin.

Danish artists found their voice with surprising suddenness during the Napoleonic wars, and the next thirty years are regarded as the Golden Age of Danish painting. Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg and Christen Købke are but two of a plethora of artists who produced perfectly delineated streetscapes, charmingly inconsequential landscapes and scenes of daily life radiant with contentedness, stylistically distinguished by brilliant naturalism and an inimitable rendering of light – crisp and warm in Greek and Italian views (many artists travelled south) but pale, pellucid and unmistakably Scandinavian in scenes of their native land.

Later in the century the mood darkened under the impulses of social commitment (Brendekilde, Henningsen), the deification of Nature (Janus La Cour) or a deeper exploration of the human psyche (Hammershøi was a sort of post-Hegelian Vermeer). Towards the turn of the century Symbolism had its proponents but many artists again turned their gaze towards their native land. The painters of Skagen on northernmost Jutland, led by P.S. Krøyer and Michael Ancher, and those of the Funen School, principally Johannes Larsen and Fritz Syberg, celebrated the low-key beauties of Denmark's shores and countryside drenched in ineffable light of the North.

As is to be expected of a prosperous and outward looking nation, there is much high quality art from the rest of the world to be seen here. And as is to be expected of a country which is virtually synonymous with good design, recent museum buildings would merit a pilgrimage even if empty. Several are enhanced by a parkland or seaside setting. Curatorship – hanging and interpretation – is exemplary.

Some attention is paid to architecture of earlier times – whitewashed brick Gothic churches, the flamboyant Renaissance of Christian IV's patronage, the handsome patrician streetscapes of the capital, the unassuming geometric perfection of Arne Jacobsen and his fellow modernists, the half-timbered vernacular of town and country.

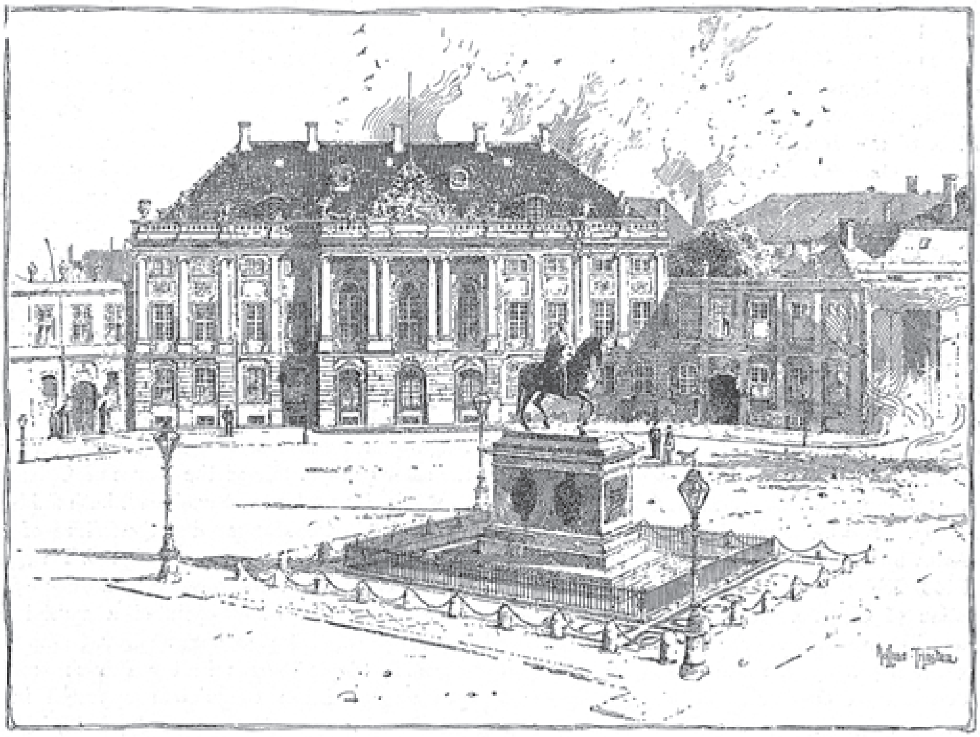
Low lying but rarely flat, the sensual topograpy of Denmark was laid down by glaciers at the end of the Ice Age. Now, as when depicted by the painters of the Golden Age, it is picturesquely clothed with patches of fertile farmland interspersed with hedges and clumps of trees.

Itinerary

Day 1: Copenhagen. Fly at c. 10.00am from London Heathrow to Copenhagen. A walk along the waterfront and through Frederiksstaden, an 18th-century development, unfurls the post-mediaeval history of the city. Pass the 1750s palaces of the Amalienborg, the finest such group outside France, the English church, Grefion Fountain, the Little Mermaid, the bastions of the Kastellet and (across the water) the amazing new opera house. First of three nights in Copenhagen.

Day 2: Copenhagen, Humlebæk. The Hirschsprungske Collection is perhaps the finest assembly of 19th-century Danish painting and retains its early 20th-century hang. North of the city in Humlebæk the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art has a permanent collection of international modern art and changing exhibitions in half-buried galleries in parkland beside the sea; a magical combination. Ordrupgaard Museum has French Impressionists and Danish art in a 19th-century mansion and a bold extension by Zaha Hadid, surrounded by woodland and gardens. Gruntvig's Church (Peter and Kaare Klint 1920–40) is one of the finest brick Expressionist edifices of the 20th century.

Day 3: Copenhagen. Explore Slotsholmen, the original core of the city: Christiansborg Palace housing the Parliament, the Renaissance stock exchange, Thorvaldsen Museum dedicated to the eponymous Neo-Classical sculptor (1770–1844). The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, magnificent benefaction of a brewer, has collections of Mediterranean antiquities,



Copenhagen, the Amalienborg Palace, wood engraving 1870.

OPERA IN OSLO, GOTHENBURG & COPENHAGEN

May 2012

Details will be available in October 2011. Register your interest now.

particularly Roman portrait sculpture, Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, Golden Age paintings and much else besides. Some free time; choices include the Viking section in the National Museum and shops selling classic Danish design in the pedestrianised Strøget.

Day 4: Copenhagen. The morning is spent at the Statens Museum for Kunst, the Danish National Gallery, which possesses an extensive collection of Danish art from the Golden Age to the present day and a fine holding of European Old Masters excellently displayed in a new wing overlooking a park. Christian IV's private palace of Rosenborg, gradually augmented 1605–33, has excellently preserved and richly decorated rooms and the royal treasury in the cellars. Leave Copenhagen by coach and cross the straits between Zealand and Funen on the 12-mile Storebælt Bridge. First of four nights in Odense.

Day 5: Fåborg, Egeskov. Drive to Fåborg on the south coast where there is an excellent museum, a private collection of recent art opened to the public in 1915, particularly strong on the Funen School. The charming old town centre is well preserved. Egeskov is a 17th-century moated mansion, well furnished, with park and gardens. Overnight Odense.

Day 6: Odense, Kerteminde, Ladby. A walk around Odense, a delightful town where old and new blend well with little cobbled streets, rehabilitated industrial buildings, riverside park and a Gothic cathedral. The Funen Art Museum has a comprehensive collection of Danish painting, the best outside Copenhagen. The fishing village of Kerteminde was home of Johannes Larsen (1867–1961), leader of the Funen school, and his house, studio and gardens are preserved with a new gallery building (Danish Museum of the Year 2007). There is a mid-afternoon choice between driving straight to Odense (free time, with the option of visiting the Hans Christian Andersen birthplace museum) or visiting the Viking ship burial museum at Ladby. Overnight Odense.

Day 7: Århus. Excursion by rail (1 hour 30 minutes) to Århus, Denmark's second city, crossing by bridge to Jutland. At the heart of the city a traffic-clogged thoroughfare has been replaced by a river, long confined to a culvert, the embankments now burgeoning with café culture. Arne Jacobsen's town hall (finished 1942) is one of Modernism's icons, mathematically precise, perfectly poised, defiantly unmonumental. The ARoS Art Museum (2004) is a brick and glass cube with a curvaceous white interior housing historic Danish art, as well as some significant pieces of modern art. There is a choice between visiting the influential university campus, a prime example of Danish Modernism (1930s), or the Old Town Museum, 16th- to 19th-century buildings from all over Denmark reassembled to form an enchanting little town. Overnight Odense.

Day 8: Copenhagen-Ishøj. Re-cross the Storebælt Straits and traverse Zealand again. Above a fine beach south of Copenhagen, the Arken Museum of Modern Art is outstanding for its striking architecture (nautical, angular), unexpected location and adventurous exhibitions. Fly from Copenhagen, returning to Heathrow c. 5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,060 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus A319); travel by private coach and some journeys by rail; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 5 dinners and 2 lunches with limited wine or beer; all admission charges to museums, etc.; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £330. Price without flights £2,890.**

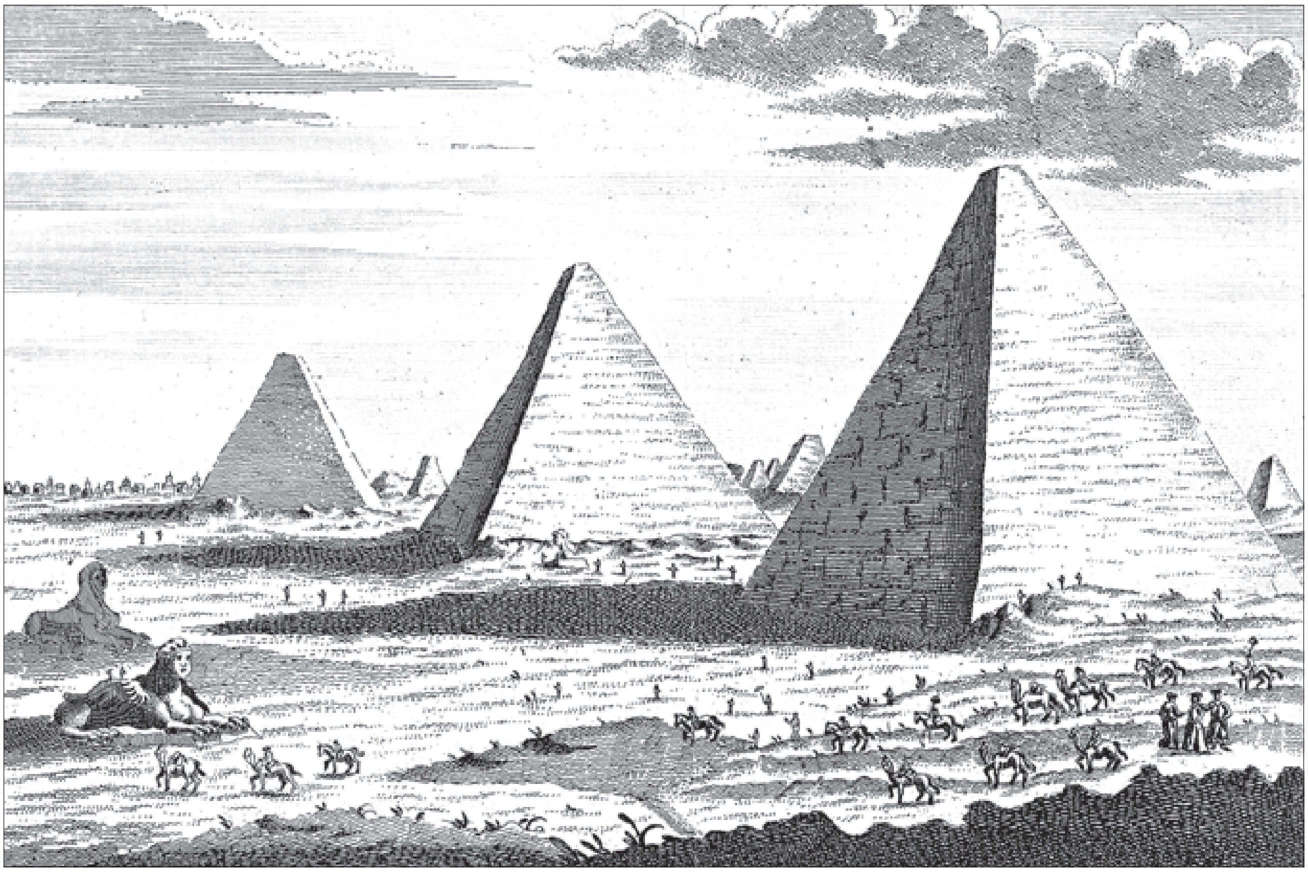
Hotels: in Copenhagen (3 nights): a traditional hotel in the Nyhavn district, close to some of the museums and the Amalienborg Palace. Rooms are small but comfortable. In Odense (4 nights): a modern 4-star hotel, a few minutes' walk from the town centre, the best in town. Hotels in Denmark generally do not have air-conditioning.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing in museums. There are also some long coach journeys; average distance per day: 31 miles. Total distance by rail: 189 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

ANCIENT EGYPT

FROM CAIRO TO ABU SIMBEL



Early-18th-century engraving of the Pyramids at Giza, elaborated with imagined progeny in the background.

3–14 October 2011 (MY 997)
12 days • £3,840
Lecturer: Dr Karen Exell

5–16 March 2012 (MY 171)
12 days • £3,840
Lecturer: Dr Angus Graham

24 September –5 October 2012 (MZ 383)
12 days • £3,840
Lecturer: Dr Karen Exell

A comprehensive introduction to Pharaonic Egypt visiting the principal sites from Giza to Abu Simbel.

A full and busy tour but it avoids rush and allows time to contemplate and absorb.

A well-planned land tour makes much better use of time than a Nile cruise.

Egypt has fascinated European travellers from the time of Herodotus, who wrote the first surviving account of the ancient land. The sheer antiquity and breadth of Egyptian civilization cannot but reduce the visitor to awe, whether it be Napoleon with his famous exhortation to his troops in front of the Pyramids that forty centuries looked down upon them, or the more humble modern traveller exploring the tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

Nearly two thousand years separate King Menes (Narmer), the unifier of Upper and Lower Egypt around 3100 BC, and Rameses II, the builder of Abu Simbel, and it was yet another thousand years before Egypt became a province of Rome.

Throughout this time Egypt has also been a fertile source of legend. The fifty daughters of Danaus fled from a marriage threat by the fifty sons of Aegyptus, as recounted by Aeschylus; and if Euripides is to be believed, Helen of Troy may have sojourned on the banks of the Nile. Biblical references abound of a land of both oppression and refuge. Patriarchs found sustenance in Egypt, Moses led his people forth, and the Holy Family fled there from the wrath of Herod.

Egypt was the first major country to be subdued by the forces of Islam, and the line of conquerors reached a turning-point with Napoleon, who brought an army not only of soldiers but also of scholars. He left both groups to continue without him, and the scholars laboured throughout the land to produce the monumental Description de L'Égypte. The vast detective work of deciphering hieroglyphic script was commenced through the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799, thereby eventually producing the key to our present understanding of ancient Egypt.

Nowhere in the world have so many monuments survived for so long, on such a scale and in such good condition. The magnificence of Egypt's standing monuments, Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic, is supplemented by an unrivalled series of tomb sculptures and paintings and by superb collections of jewellery and artefacts in the Egyptian museums.

And through the midst of the land, with its origins in the deep south, flows the Nile, which with its annual inundation was the source of all that has made Egyptian civilisation great.

Itinerary

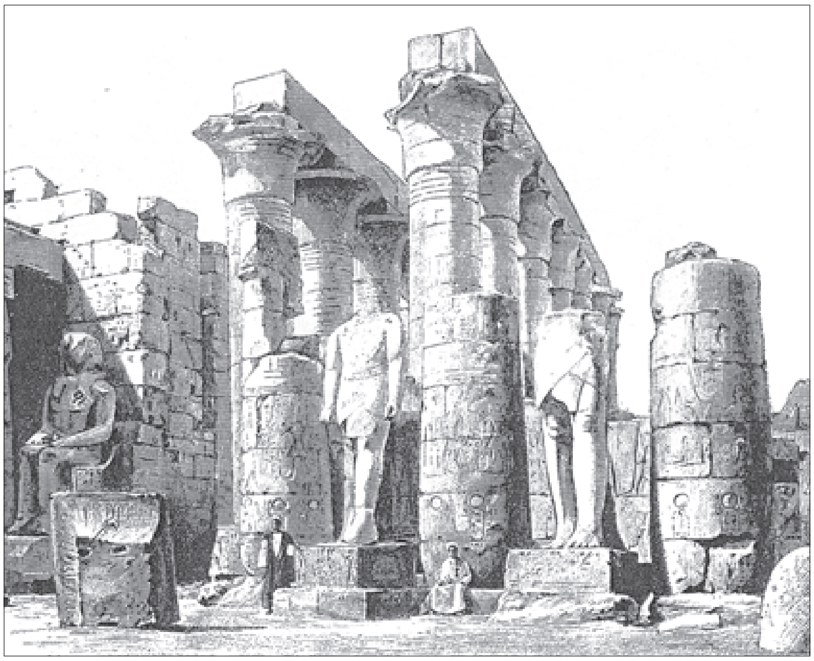
Day 1: Luxor. Fly at c. 2.35pm directly from London Heathrow to Luxor, arriving c. 9.30pm (time in the air: c. 4 hours 45 minutes). First of five nights in Luxor.

Day 2: Luxor. A leisurely day with talks by the lecturer outlining the main themes of the tour. Morning visit to Luxor Museum. Free afternoon. Overnight Luxor.

Day 3: Luxor. Full day visiting the Theban West Bank, the city of the dead and the Valley of the Kings, where the New Kingdom pharaohs are buried in magnificently decorated rock cut tombs, the vast royal mortuary temples erected as Houses of Eternity for the cult of the king. Visit the Tombs of the Nobles containing exquisite reliefs and painted festival and funeral scenes and the village of the royal workmen, Deir el Medina, who built and decorated the royal tombs, a rare settlement site, with their beautifully decorated tombs with perfectly preserved colour. Overnight Luxor.

Day 4: Luxor. The ancient site of Thebes and the vast temple complex of Karnak including the spectacular temple of Amun and the open air museum. Free afternoon. Evening visit to Luxor temple, a well preserved structure completed by Rameses II. Overnight Luxor.

Day 5: Denderah. Morning visit to the well-preserved and roofed Ptolemaic-Roman Temple of Hathor at Denderah. Return to Luxor through the rural landscape of Upper Egypt, unchanged for millennia. Overnight Luxor.



Luxor, wood engraving 1896 from 'The Struggle of the Nations'.

Day 6: Edfu, Kom Ombo, Aswan. Drive south through the agricultural landscape and view the desert edge of Southern Upper Egypt to see the Temple of Horus at Edfu, the most complete of the Egyptian temples. At Kom Ombo visit the remains of the unique double temple to Sobek and Haroeris (Horus the elder), teetering on the banks of the Nile. First of three nights in the ancient border city of Aswan.

Day 7: Kitchener's Island, St Simeon, nobles' tombs. Travel by boat to the Old and Middle Kingdom tombs cut into the rock high on the West Bank. Island of Plants (Kitchener's Island), a lush botanical garden with tropical vegetation imported by the eponymous British soldier. Optional visit by camel to the lonely seventh-century ruined fortress-monastery of St Simeon, situated on the edge of the desert. Alternatively, take a bird watching trip through the cateract at Aswan on a motor boat accompanied by an ornithologist. Overnight Aswan.

Day 8: Temple of Philae, High Dam. The High Dam is one of the engineering wonders of the world. View in the distance the brooding hulk of Kalabsha temple, relocated to the banks of Lake Nasser as the High Dam was built. Between the High Dam and the Old Dam, the Temple of Philae, dedicated to the goddess Isis, reconstructed on a landscaped island following the flooding of the original island. The ancient granite quarries where a flawed obelisk dating to the 18th Dynasty lies unfinished. The Nubian Museum, excellent collections of Nubian life from the Neolithic to the present. Final night Aswan.

Day 9: Abu Simbel, Cairo. Fly to Abu Simbel to visit the dramatic twin temples of Rameses II and his great royal wife, Nefertari, on the shores of Lake Nasser. Transfer by air to Cairo for the first of three nights.

Day 10: Giza, Cairo. On the edge of Cairo at Giza is the largest and most renowned complex of Pyramids, the solar boat museum and the Sphinx. Afternoon visit to the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities to view the richest collection of Pharaonic art in the world, including treasures from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Overnight Cairo.

Day 11: Dahshur, Saqqarah, Cairo. Drive to the Dahshur pyramid field to view and visit the pyramids predating the Giza pyramids, the cathedral-like interior of the Red Pyramid is an engineering marvel. Saqqarah, the necropolis of the ancient capital city of Memphis. The Step Pyramid complex contains the earliest pyramid and Egypt's first building in stone, the pyramid of Teti, containing the Pyramid Texts relating the king's ascent to the stars. The Mastaba of Mereruka has detailed and finely rendered painted scenes of daily life. Overnight Cairo.

Day 12: Cairo. Fly from Cairo, arriving London Heathrow at approximately 1.05pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,840 (deposit £350). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Egyptair flights London to Luxor (aircraft: Boeing 777), Aswan-Abu Simbel-Cairo (aircraft: Airbus 320) and Cairo to London (aircraft: Boeing 777). Hotel accommodation as described below. Breakfasts, six lunches (some are picnics) and seven dinners, including wine, water and coffee. All admission to museums, sites, etc., visited with the group. All gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers, local guides. All state and airport taxes. The cost of the Egyptian visa (if flying with the group). The services of the lecturer and a local guide. **Single supplement £360**. **Price without international flights £3,300**.

Hotels: Luxor (5 nights): locally rated 5-star hotel on the banks of the Nile with delightful gardens, part of the Sofitel group. Aswan (3 nights): a 4-star hotel on the Nile, recently refurbished. Cairo (3 nights): a 5-star hotel, centrally located. All hotels have open-air pools.

How strenuous? This tour is not suitable for anyone with any difficulty with everyday walking or stairclimbing. Visits to the archaeological sites involve walking over rough and uneven ground. There are some early starts, and the heat during the day can be tiring. Average distance by coach per day: 25 miles.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. If you are flying with the group we will arrange for it to be issued on arrival (the cost is included in the tour price); if you are flying independently we can arrange a visa on arrival, with a transfer, for a charge. Passports must be valid for 6 months from entry into Egypt.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

CAIRO & ALEXANDRIA

FROM ALEXANDER THE GREAT TO MOHAMMED ALI

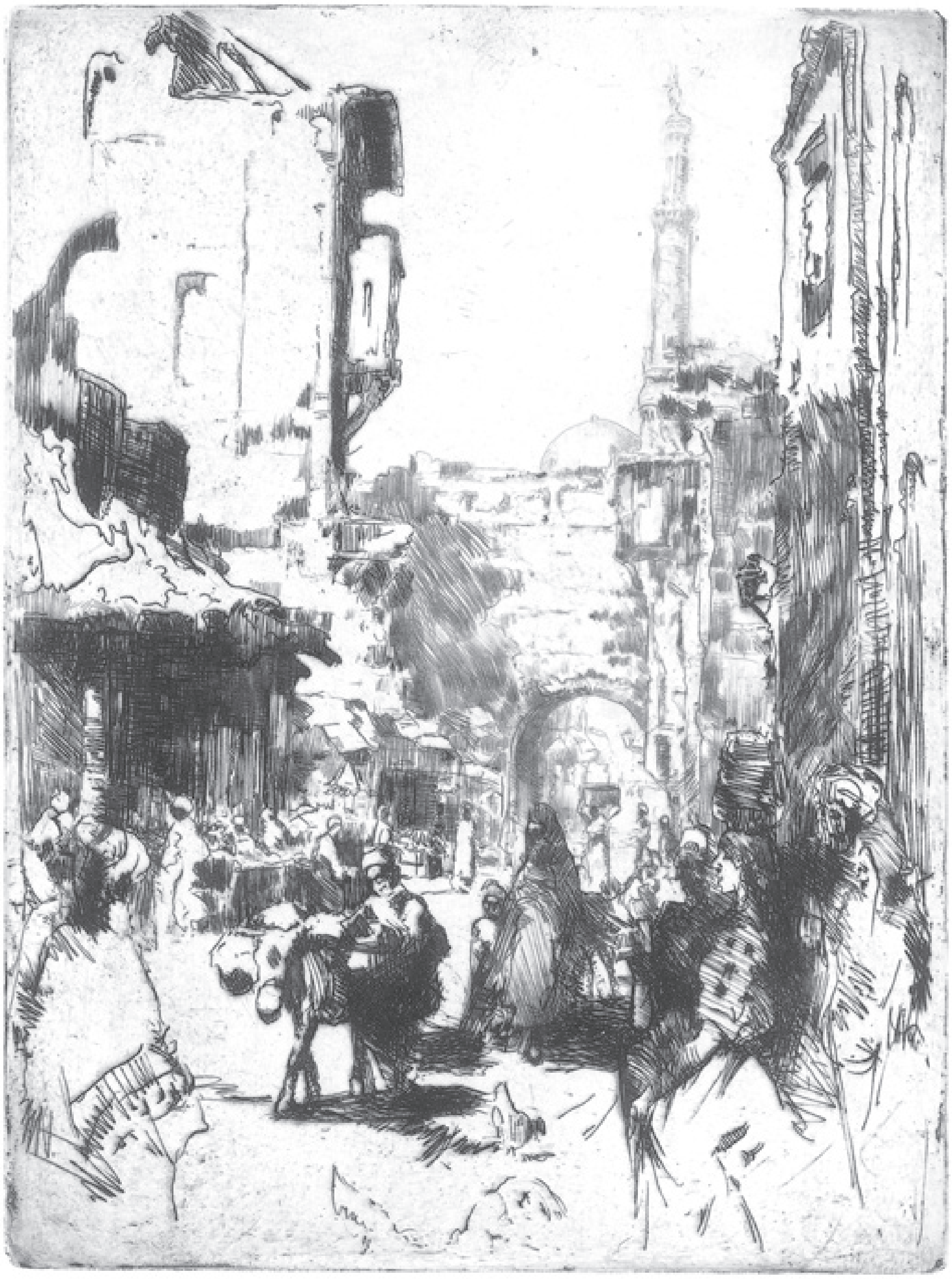
19–27 March 2012 (MY 184)
9 days • £3,480
Lecturer to be confirmed

Ideal for a return visit to Egypt.

Take a connoisseur's approach to the two cities, avoiding large hotels and package holiday routes.

See the faded glory of Alexandria and explore Islamic Cairo in depth.

Talks by local experts are a feature.



Cairo, etching c. 1930.

Of those very few countries which have in the course of history emerged to dominate the age, most do so for but one brief moment before slipping back among the also-rans. Not so Egypt, which has repeatedly achieved pre-eminence in successive millennia.

Pharaonic Egypt had the longest innings of any civilization, but as soon as its demise had been given the coup de grace by Alexander the Great, the city which bears his name became the leader of the Hellenistic world. A thousand years later Cairo had become the largest and, according to many a traveller's account, the most beautiful metropolis in the Islamic world, and the seat of Sunni orthodoxy.

Alexandria was not only the richest, most densely populated and most ethnically varied city on the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic era. It was also the most important intellectual centre of the Graeco-Roman world, with the famous library, the first museum and facilities for scientific research stimulating a two-hundred year ferment of philosophic and scientific thought and discovery.

Surprisingly little remains of the ancient city. The library was torched in AD 391 by the most fanatical religious zealots of the time, Christians, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century Alexandria was little more than a fishing village. Then Mohammed Ali, the moderniser of Egypt, had a canal dug to link it with the Nile. Once again it became a prosperous port, and again – until Nasserite nationalisation in the 1950s – the most cosmopolitan city on the Mediterranean. But the quantity of active churches of various denominations is testimony to its recent past.

The city has renewed aspirations to become a cultural centre of the Mediterranean with the revived Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The wonderful building, designed by the Norwegian firm Snøhetta, is one of the most brilliant of our time.

Speaking not historically but existentially, Cairo could be claimed to be the mother of all cities. A chaotic and cacophonous compendium of every urban cliché, magnified and intensified by sheer scale (pop. 18 million), it is not a city for the fainthearted. But it exudes undying vitality and warmth of welcome, and is an endlessly fascinating and hugely exciting place to visit. And that's without the history and architecture.

Cairo also had not been a settlement of any significance in Pharaonic times, its emergence as a town being a by-product of the emptying of Memphis and Hieropolis during the era of Roman rule. An adjacent site was established as a garrison by the Arab army which conquered Egypt in AD 641, and each subsequent dynasty of caliphs – Fatimid, Mamluk, Ottoman – established 'new towns' contiguous with their predecessors, thus fuelling the Brobdingnagian growth of the city as a whole.

The range and richness of the architectural heritage is without parallel in the Middle East. There are magnificent mosques dating from the time of first Islamic conquerors to the nineteenth century, quantities of elaborately architectural tombs, madrassas, mansions, and city gates. There are also Coptic churches, decadent royal palaces and even some twentieth-century buildings of note.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 3.00pm from London Heathrow to Cairo, arriving c. 9.00pm. Spend the first of two nights in the district of Maadi, central Cairo.

Day 2: Old Cairo. Begin with the excellent sculptures, paintings and manuscripts in the Coptic Museum followed by the mediaeval 'Hanging Church' and the church of St Sergius. Compare the designs with those in Ben Ezra synagogue and the mosque of Amr Ibn al-Mis. Cross the Nile in the afternoon to visit the gardens and Nilometer of Rhoda Island. Overnight Cairo.

Day 3: Wadi Natrun, Alexandria. Keeping the Coptic theme, see the 7th-century monasteries at Wadi Natrun, breaking the drive along the Desert Road to Alexandria. On arrival at the Mediterranean city, visit Qaitbey Citadel, a stronghold protecting the old harbour on the site of the Pharos which was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Lecture by a resident archaeologist. Two nights are spent in Alexandria.

Day 4: Alexandria. Visit the labyrinthine Roman catacombs, pass Pompey's Pillar, the most prominent monument of the city's Hellenistic past, and then spend the rest of the morning touring the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, tilted towards the Mediterranean, a building of breathtaking beauty. In the afternoon visit the National Museum with exhibits from Pharaonic, Graeco-Roman, Coptic and Islamic times. Lecture on Alexandrian literature by a local expert.

Day 5: Alexandria to Cairo. The morning is dedicated to Alexandrian villas, Neoclassical, Italianate and a Royal mock hunting lodge, all testament to the city's past opulence. Drive back to Cairo in the afternoon, where four nights are spent in the Islamic Quarter.

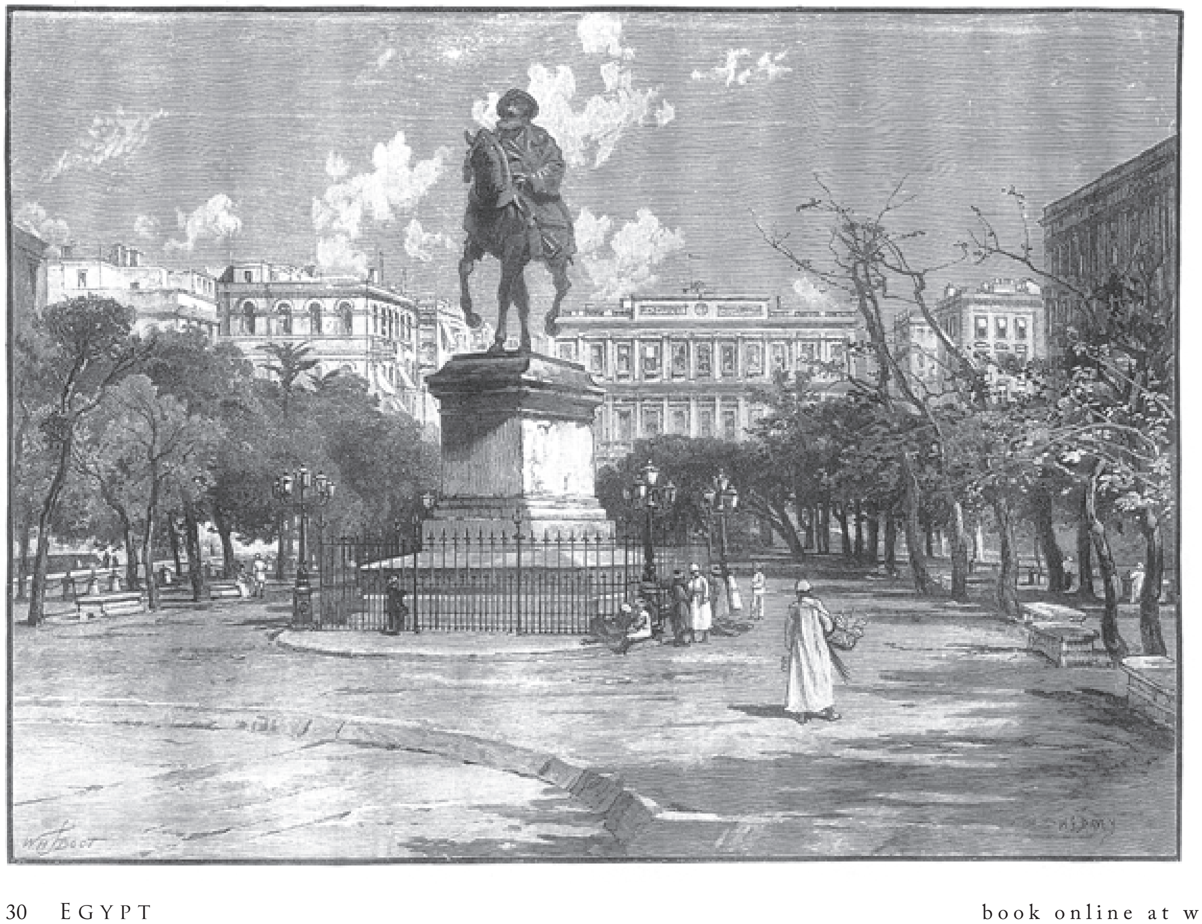
Day 6: Cairo. Take a walking tour of bustling Islamic Cairo from Bab al-Futuh through the maze of Khan al-Khalili bazaar to Al-Azhar, founded in 970 as an Islamic university and still the fount of Sunni orthodoxy.

Day 7: Cairo. Visit to the vast but affectingly simple Ahmed Ibn Tulun Mosque, which dates from the 9th century, and the adjacent and charming Gayer-Anderson Museum. Also see the mosques of Sultan Hassan and al-Rifa'i from the 14th and 19th centuries, which form a lesson in the architectural legacy of the Mamluk era. The afternoon is free for independent exploration.

Day 8: Cairo. The Museum of Islamic Arts gives a well-ordered overview of the history of the crafts and motifs next seen *in situ*. See the Northern Cemeteries, 'Cities of the Dead', an extensive area of architecturally lavish mausolea. Continue to Al-Azhar Park, the 'lungs' of the city and up to the Citadel, begun by Saladin and housing the 14th-century Sultan al-Nasir Mosque and 19th-century Mohammed Ali Mosque.

Day 9. Fly from Cairo c. 9.30am, arriving London Heathrow c. 1.00pm.

Alexandria, wood engraving 1890 from 'The Picturesque Mediterranean' Volume I.



Practicalities

Price: £3,480 (deposit £300) this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Egyptair flights (Boeing 777); accommodation as described below; all breakfasts, 6 lunches and 5 dinners with wine (when available), water and coffee; travel by air-conditioned coach and coasters; all admissions; tips for waiters, drivers and the guide; all taxes; the cost of the Egyptian visa (if flying with the group) and the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £460; price without flights £3,090.**

Hotels: central Cairo (2 nights): a beautifully restored villa, now a boutique hotel in a quiet area. Alexandria (2 nights): centrally located 4-star, a monument to another time, comfortable if noisy. Islamic Cairo (4 nights): a newly-renovated boutique hotel with individually designed, well-appointed rooms.

How strenuous? The cities are hectic and teeming, many monuments are reached on foot and pavements are often uneven. Participants should be happy climbing minarets. Average distance by coach per day: 24 miles.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. If you are flying with the group we arrange for it to be issued on arrival (the cost is included); if you are flying independently we can arrange a visa on arrival, with a transfer, for a charge. Passports must be valid for 6 months from entry into Egypt.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

CHRISTMAS IN THE DESERT

PHARAOHS & EMPERORS

21–28 December 2011 (MY 132)
8 days • £3,400
Lecturer: Nicole Douek

Visit some of the greatest Pharaonic, Ptolomaic and Roman sites of the Nile valley and Western Desert.

Spend Christmas Day surrounded by dunes, ruins and date palms.

Travel in 4x4 land cruisers with a team of desert specialists including a desert chef.

How exotic can it get?

Christmas lunch surrounded by great sand dunes overlooking the Roman fortress of Labaka, in the oasis of Kharga in the Western Desert of Egypt. The landscape is almost surreal. Pink mountains form the backdrop to ancient farmsteads, temples and aqueducts stretched out along the Darb el-Arba'in, the 40-days caravan route from Nubia to the Nile. This and the two other great forts of Dush and Um el-Dabadib were the southernmost outposts of the Roman empire. Emperors Trajan and Hadrian stationed their legions in this now deserted place to guard the valuable caravans of gold, ivory and slaves that supplied the ever increasing needs of Rome. Everywhere, remains of what were once thriving communities litter the sand; look closely at the walls on ancient houses and you find they were painted Pompeii red with blue borders. A recently revived aqueduct gushes water and a field of vegetables, flowers, date palms and olive trees now gives life once more to the parched desert soil.

In Kharga oasis, the Christian cemetery of El-Bagawat has 263 chapel-tombs, possibly the earliest dated in Egypt, decorated with naïf paintings illustrating the stories of the Old Testament, another unexpected and surprising discovery on this tour.

But before the emperors of Rome, we will spend some time with those other great kings – the pharaohs of ancient Egypt. In Luxor, their imperial capital, monuments to their power and wealth are found on both the East and West banks of the Nile. 'Palaces of giants', was how the French writer Gustave Flaubert described them when he visited the area in 1848. Vast temples leave you totally dumbstruck. Tombs in the desert canyon, now known as the Valley of the Kings, remind us that this was once truly a valley of gold. Paintings on the tomb walls describe the daily lives of ancient Egyptians, whether at work or at play. Their architecture, art, beliefs and customs come back to us, almost as if they had never left.

To complete this different Christmas, the temple of Denderah: a reminder of the arrival of the Macedonians and Alexander the Great. He and his successors, the Ptolemies, may have been from the other side of the Mediterranean, but once they arrived in Egypt, they, like everybody else before them, transformed themselves into Egyptian rulers, and life in the Nile valley continued as it had done for thousands of years.

Statue of Harmhabi, engraving 1896.

Itinerary

Day 1: Luxor. Fly at c. 2.00pm from London Heathrow to Cairo and onto Luxor, arriving c. 11.30pm (total time in the air: c. 5 hours 45 minutes). Cross the Nile and spend the first of three nights on the West Bank.

Day 2: Luxor. Free morning. Afternoon visit to the ancient site of Thebes, the vast temple complex of Karnak including the spectacular temple of Amun and the open air museum. Evening visit to Luxor temple, built by Rameses II and illuminated by night.

Day 3: Luxor. Spend a full day visiting the Theban West Bank, the city of the dead, the Valley of the Kings, where the New Kingdom pharaohs are buried in magnificently decorated rock cut tombs, the vast royal mortuary temples erected as Houses of Eternity for the cult of the king and the Tombs of the Nobles containing exquisite relief and painted festival and funeral scenes. See also the village of the royal workmen who built and decorated the royal tombs, a rare settlement site, with their beautifully decorated tombs with perfectly preserved colour.

Day 4: Luxor, Kharga. Drive through the desert to the oasis town of Kharga via the Roman fort at Dush. Two nights in Kharga.

Day 5: Kharga. A full day excursion to explore the spectacular Roman sites of Um el-Dabadib and Fort Labaka with Christmas lunch beneath the palms of an oasis by the fort.

Day 6: Kharga, Luxor. Visit Kharga Museum and the Christian necropolis of El-Bagawat and drive back to Luxor. Two further nights on the West Bank.

Day 7: Denderah, Luxor. Visit to the well-preserved and roofed Ptolemaic Temple of Hathor at Denderah. Return to Luxor through the rural landscape of Upper Egypt, unchanged for millennia. Visit the Luxor museum.

Day 8: fly to Cairo and onto London Heathrow, arriving c. 12.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,400 (deposit £350). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Egyptair flights London to Luxor via Cairo return (Boeing 777 and Airbus 320); accommodation as described below; all dinners and lunches (some meals are al fresco prepared by our own kitchen team), including wine, water and coffee; travel by coach and 4x4 vehicles; all admissions; all gratuities for restaurant staff, guides, kitchen team and drivers; the cost of the Egyptian visa (if flying with the group); all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £280** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,980.**

Hotels: Luxor (5 nights): a tranquil 5-star retreat on the West Bank of the Nile with individually designed rooms. Kharga (2 nights): a 4-star, comfortable with garden. Both hotels have outdoor swimming pools.

How strenuous? There is a lot of strenuous walking involved in visiting the archaeological sites over rough and uneven ground. All cars are new 4x4s, driven by desert specialists who are excellent drivers and mechanics. Average distance per day: approximately 56 miles.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. If you are flying with the group we will arrange for it to be issued on arrival (the cost is included in the tour price); if you are flying independently we can arrange a visa on arrival, with a transfer, for a charge. Passports must be valid for 6 months from entry into Egypt.

Small group: 12 to 22 participants.

DESERTS & OASES

'THE ISLAND OF THE BLESSED'

28 February–12 March 2012 (MY 170)
14 days • £4,350
Lecturer: Nicole Douek

Traverse the vast deserts west of the Nile and visit verdant oases which are almost unchanged.

There are many archaeological remains scattered through the desert; there is also time in Cairo, Alexandria and Luxor.

Most travel is by modern-day caravan: new 4x4s with an accompanying desert chef.

'Upon travelling towards the interior, one finds… the region where wild beasts live, and beyond that is the region of dunes that extends from Thebes in Egypt to the Pillars of Heracles. Along this belt, separated from one another by about ten days' journey, are little hills formed of lumps of salt, and from the top of each gushes a spring of cold, sweet water. Men live in the neighbourhood of these springs – they are the furthest south… of any human beings... The place is known, in Greek, as the Island of the Blessed.' (Herodotus, IV, 181)

To the ancient Egyptians, the world was divided into two parts. One was the 'Black Land', the Nile Valley with its rich, fertile soil, plentiful water and green fields. Beyond it lay the 'Red Land', the desert, the land of death, dangerous, mysterious, the physical embodiment of chaos. The Greeks believed the desert was the home of Medusa, and only the brave risked its terrors to visit the oracle at Siwa.

Caravans loaded with slaves, salt, ivory and gold travelled up and down its dunes for millennia. Entire armies disappeared without trace; only the hardiest and most curious of explorers from around the world crossed its vast expanse.

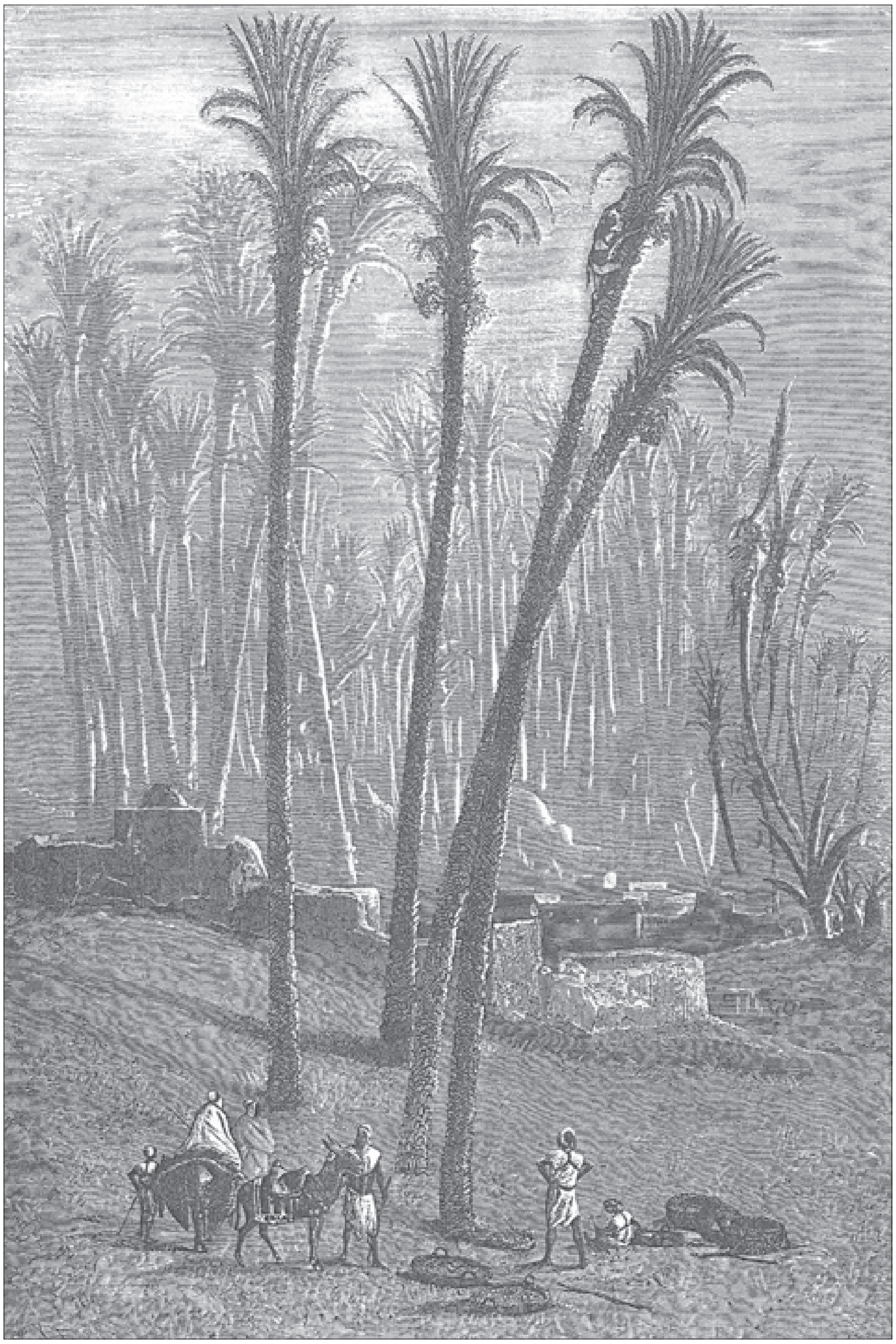
The Western Desert – the easternmost edge of the Sahara – was formed over millions of years as a result of varying and violent climatic conditions. Once covered by sea, its contours and rocks were shaped through the effect of water, wind and volcanoes, resulting in vast massifs of granite, sandstone and limestone and a seemingly endless sea of sand dunes. But there are also areas where water bubbled to the surface, the 'islands in the middle of the sand' described by Herodotus, where vegetation could thrive and humans could settle.

In depressions in the land, lakes were created by the receding sea or by springs. A chain of five major oases grew in those basins, providing man with food, shelter, and, in time, permanent settlement and a very distinctive and individual desert tradition. The oases became part of Egypt, governed by the pharaohs as any other province. Towns, temples, and cemeteries from different periods of Egyptian history bear evidence to the close relationship between the oases and the centres of power and civilization along the Nile.

Yet even now visitors have the feeling of being in a different world. Away from the cacophony of modern life in Cairo and Alexandria, past the battlefields of El-Alamein, the desert stretches towards far-away Siwa, still so remote that its people speak Siwan, a Berber tongue of the desert. Famed in antiquity for the oracle of Amun, it is full of saline lakes, lush palm groves, bubbling springs and remains of the famed expedition of Alexander the Great.

Travelling eastwards towards the Nile, Bahariya suddenly appears – a paradise of date palms and irrigated green fields, surrounded entirely by black volcanic hills. An extensive necropolis of Graeco-Roman mummies, recently discovered, bears witness to its importance in the economy of Hellenistic Egypt.

Continue south and you reach the unique White Desert of pure snow-white limestone rocks sculpted by the winds into unreal shapes, one of the most memorable sights of the desert. And on to tranquil Farafra, an idyllic



Late-19th-century wood engraving from 'Land of the Pharaohs'.

place where time seems to have stopped. In the two southern oases of Dakhla and Kharga there are ruins of Roman forts and townships strung along the ancient slave route, the Darb el Arbain, side by side with Islamic and early pharaonic ruins.

On mortuary chapel ceilings in the third-century Christian cemetery at Bagawat are some of the earliest representations of Bible stories. But the desert is never far away – you are so close to the Great Sand Sea that you feel almost engulfed by the moving dunes, and at dusk you can hear their eternal song.

'The desert is beautiful,' said the Little Prince in Saint-Exupery's strange and lovely tale. 'One sits down on a desert sand dune, sees nothing, hears nothing. Yet through the silence something throbs, and gleams…. What makes the desert beautiful,' said the Little Prince, 'is that somewhere it hides a well…'

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 2.00pm from London Heathrow to Cairo (time in the air: c. 4 hours 30 minutes). First of two nights in central Cairo.

Day 2: Cairo. Begin with a visit to a restored Ottoman house museum and spend some free time in the bazaar. In the afternoon, visit the Egyptian Museum of Antiquities, followed by some time in Khan el-Khalili.

Day 3: Alexandria. Drive to Alexandria to visit the Graeco-Roman catacombs of Kom el-Shugafa, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and Fort Qait Bey, a stronghold protecting the old harbour on the site of the ancient Pharos. Overnight near el-Alamein.

Day 4: El-Alamein, Siwa. Visit the museum and the British, German and Italian war cemeteries. Drive into the desert to Siwa. First of two nights in Siwa.

Day 5: Siwa. Visit Siwa, including Aghurmi and the temple of Amun where Alexander the Great learnt his destiny, the temple of Nectanebo, Jebel el-Mawta and its Saite 26th-dynasty tombs. Stroll through the ancient fortress of Shali.

Day 6: Siwa to Bahariya. Drive off-road from Siwa to Bahariya, a long and exhilarating journey of ever-changing desert landscape. Stop on the way to look at uninhabited oases, to collect fossils, and for lunch on top of a 'whaleback' sand dune. Overnight Bahariya.

Day 7: Bahariya, Farafra. See the Graeco-Roman mummies in the Antiquities Department Magazines and two 26th-dynasty tombs at Qasr el-Selim. Drive off-road through the Black Desert, stopping at Crystal Mountain. Overnight Farafra.

Day 8: The White Desert. Explore the huge 'inselbergs' of pure white limestone that litter the desert for miles, creating an unreal and unforgettable landscape. Dinner is served under the stars. Overnight under canvas in a desert camp.

Day 9: El Qasr, Dakhla. See the workshop of a local artist before visiting the Islamic fortress town of El Qasr. Overnight Dakhla.

Day 10: Dakhla, Kharga. Visit Old Kingdom tombs of the governors of the Oases and continue through the 'mirage' desert to Kharga, coasting the edge of the Great Sand Sea and the 'horseshoe' dunes. Stop at the 3rd-century Christian necropolis of Bagawat with biblical scenes painted on the vaults of the tombs, and drive on to the Museum of Wadi Gedid in central Kharga. Overnight Kharga.

Day 11: Kharga. The day is spent in the desert exploring the spectacular Roman ruins of Umm el-Dabadib and Fort Labaka. Overnight Kharga.

Day 12: to Luxor. Drive through the desert to Luxor. Two nights in Luxor.

Day 13: Rest day. Optional visits to the ancient Theban sites.

Day 14. Fly to Heathrow, arriving c. 1.00pm.

EXPLORING MIDDLE EGYPT

19–28 October 2011 (MY 998)
10 days • £3,480
Lecturer: Nicole Douek

Ask us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

An alternative take on visiting some of the archaeological wonders of Egypt.

Journey into the heart of the country: the Fayoum, Minya and Tell al-Amarna.

Also includes off-beat visits to prehistoric and more contemporary sites.

Travel by new 4x4 vehicles with a team of desert specialists.

Practicalities

Price: £4,350 (deposit £400) this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Egyptair flights (Boeing 777); accommodation as described below; all breakfasts, 11 lunches (some picnics in the desert prepared by a 'desert chef') and all dinners with wine (when available), water and coffee; travel by air-conditioned coach and 4x4 vehicles; all admissions to group visits; tips for waiters, drivers, and local guides; all state and airport taxes; the cost of the Egyptian visa and the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £240**. **Price without flights £3,930.**

Hotels: Cairo (2 nights): a new boutique hotel in a restored villa in a quiet but central district; near El Alamein (1 night): a glitzy, locally rated 5-star hotel on the coast; Siwa (2 nights): 4-star Bedouin lodge; Bahariya (1 night): 3-star eco lodge set around a natural spring; rooms are traditionally furnished; Farafra (1 night): 4-star hotel, recently refurbished chalet-type accommodation in desert style; White Desert (1 night): Desert Cruise camp specially erected for the group is basic but includes private tents, shower and toilet facilities; Dakhla (1 night): 3-star hotel with chalet-type accommodation; Kharga (2 nights): a 4-star hotel, comfortable with garden; Luxor (2 nights): a 5-star hotel on the West Bank of the Nile, a tranquil retreat with individually designed rooms. Please note that some of the hotels are fairly basic but rooms are all en-suite.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. If you are flying with the group we will arrange for it to be issued on arrival (the cost is included in the price); if you are flying independently we can arrange a visa on arrival, with a transfer, for a charge. All passports must be valid for 6 months from entry into Egypt.

How strenuous? This is a taxing tour with long distances, walking and scrambling over sand and rocks and off-road driving. It is not suitable for anyone with any walking difficulties or back problems. At times participants will be far from modern medical facilities. All cars are new 4x4s, driven by desert specialists who are excellent drivers and mechanics. Average distance per day: approximately 150 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 18 participants.

SINAI

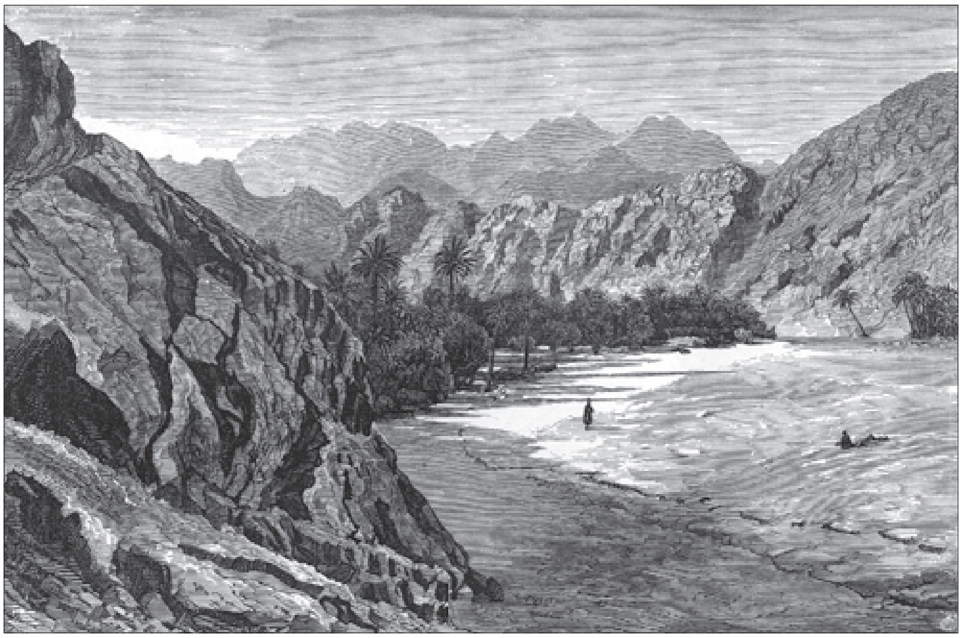
COPTS, BYZANTINES & LANDCRUISERS

13–21 October 2012 (MZ 405)
9 days • £3,400
Lecturer: Nicole Douek

An exploration of Christianity and monasticism in Egypt.

Talks on its long and varied history and a visit to St Catherine's Monastery.

A wilderness experience in sublime desert landscapes – only for those who are fit and have stamina.



Wadi Feiran, wood engraving c. 1880.

Egypt has a great many superlatives: the longest river in the world, the tallest pyramids, the most ancient script, and a civilization that survived, seemingly without many changes, for over 3000 years. However, it is not often that Egypt is associated with the birth of Christianity. According to tradition, the new Christian faith is said to have been preached in Alexandria by the Evangelist Mark, sometime around 60 AD. By the 2nd century the new faith was embraced by Alexandrian Jews, Greeks and native Egyptians, gradually spreading south into the Nile Valley. It is here that monasticism was established, as a result of the persecution of Christians by Roman emperors. Some sought refuge in desert settlements, whereas others chose to live in solitude as hermits. By 391, the Byzantine emperor Theodosius outlawed paganism and Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire.

Recently, the Coptic community of Egypt has experienced an extraordinary spiritual and ethnic revival, and the ancient monasteries are growing in size and in importance, preserving the beliefs, and the art of the early Christians, as well as the Coptic language. To this day, the patriarch of the Coptic church is selected from among the monks of the monastery of St Anthony. This is our journey on this tour, to explore the places where Christianity was born.

But we will also travel through the Sinai peninsula, that 'great and terrible wilderness' of the Old Testament. It is at its heart that the events narrated in Exodus took place, and it is on top of Mount Sinai that Moses is said to have received the Ten Commandments. Another first, with the birth of Judaism, the most ancient form of monotheism. By the time the emperor Justinian founded the monastery of St Catherine in the sixth century, the monastery and Gebel Musa already had become places of pilgrimage.

Its fame, now, is also due to the extraordinary collection of icons housed in the new museum curated by the Byzantine scholars of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

With the arrival of Islam, this same area was on the route taken by Islamic conquerors into the Maghreb and, later, Muslim pilgrims on their way to the holy city of Mecca. The library of the monastery preserves a 'firman', a decree, signed by the prophet Mohammed, commanding his armies to respect the ancient sanctuary and its monks.

In fact, the Sinai peninsula has always been a place of passage. Jutting into the Red Sea, and wedged between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, it is a link between Asia and Africa, and it has always had great strategic value. Not only did its vast quantities of minerals attract empire builders, but it has been the natural route for countless armies marching to or from the ancient Levant. Along these same routes travelled caravans of traders transporting their goods to the markets of Egypt. In recent years Sinai has seen enormous and rapid changes – a new pipeline that brings fresh water from the Suez Canal to the various parts of northern Sinai, desalination plants in coastal towns, and of course, tourism on its eastern shore, where diving and snorkelling have created new resorts along its coral reef.

Our tour concentrates on the 'real' Sinai, with its vast landscapes and its vivid colours, its high granite mountains, its volcanic outcrops and golden sand dunes, its acacia groves and hidden oases, its emptiness and solitude. We trace the history of this land and explore the events that led to the creation of the three great monotheistic religions of our world.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 3.15pm from London Heathrow to Cairo (time in the air: c. 4 hours 30 minutes). Spend two nights in central Cairo.

Day 2: Cairo. Visit some of the most important monuments of Coptic Cairo: the churches and museum. Lunch in Al-Azhar Park, followed by free time in Khan el-Khalili bazaar.

Day 3: Eastern Desert, Ain Sokhna. Leave Cairo for the desert monasteries of St Anthony and St Paul. Continue up the Red Sea coast to Ain Sokhna. Overnight Ain Sokhna.

Day 4: Sinai, St Catherine's. Cross through the tunnel under Suez Canal into Sinai, through mountainous landscape via Wadi Sikh to Wadi Mokattab with its many rock inscriptions, through Wadi Feiran to St Catherine's Village. Spend two nights in St Catherine's Village.

Day 5: St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai. Morning tour of St Catherine's. The monastery grew around a chapel founded by Empress Helena in AD 337 on the site of the Burning Bush, revered by Jews, Christians and Muslims; the fortified walls and the church were provided by Emperor Justinian in the 6th century, and the icons and manuscripts, in unparalleled numbers, date from the Byzantine period. We arrange special access to parts not usually visited *(subject to confirmation).* Optional climb up Mt Sinai; or take an easier walk up El Malga or a desert drive.

Day 6: Central Sinai, Nuweiba. The day is spent off-road exploring some of the most spectacular sights of central Sinai: Wadi Genah, Wadi Safra, rocks of Gebel Barqa. Bedouin lunch near Holy Mountain followed by the prehistoric settlement of Nuwamis and its mysterious dry-wall circular stone tombs.

Continue to the Red Sea coast to spend two nights in Nuweiba.

Day 7: Nuweiba. Optional camel trek and walk through Wadi Ghazala to the oasis of Ain Khudra. Yellow and red sand, pink sandstone, black basalt rocks and green palm trees make this one of the most beautiful areas of Sinai. Picnic lunch in the oasis near a clear water spring then drive through Wadi Khudra. Bedouin dinner under the stars in El Magaza.

Day 8: Nuweiba to Heliopolis. Drive north along the coast to Salah el-Din Village and take the short crossing by boat to Pharaoh's Island, believed to be the ancient Phoenician port of Eziongeber. Visit the imposing Ottoman fortress. Drive to Cairo via the Ahmed Hamdi Tunnel passing under the Suez Canal. Overnight in Heliopolis.

Day 9: fly to Heathrow, arriving at c. 1.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,400 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Egyptair flights (Boeing 777); accommodation as described below; all breakfasts, lunches (some picnics) and dinners with wine (when available), water and coffee; travel by air-conditioned coach and 4x4; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; all taxes; the cost of the Egyptian visa (if flying with the group); the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £320. Price without flights £3,010**.

Hotels: Cairo (2 nights): a new boutique hotel in a restored villa in a quiet but central district; Ain Sokhna (1 night): 5-star hotel by the sea; St Catherine's (2 nights): the monastery's own guesthouse, basic but ideally located; Nuweiba (2 nights): a 5-star beach resort hotel with well-equipped rooms; Cairo Heliopolis (1 night): an international 5-star hotel.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. If you are flying with the group we arrange for it to be issued on arrival; if you are flying independently we can arrange a visa on arrival, with a transfer, for a charge. All passports must be valid for 6 months from entry into Egypt.

How strenuous? This is a strenuous tour with distances covered by 4x4s, much of it off-road, and a couple of (optional) long walks. It is not suitable for anyone with any walking difficulties or back problems. At times participants will be far from modern medical facilities. All cars are new 4x4s, driven by desert specialists who are excellent drivers and mechanics. Average distance per day: c. 83 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

THE BALTIC STATES

ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA

9–21 July 2012 (MY 305)
13 days • £3,220
Lecturer: Neil Taylor

20 August–1 September 2012 (MY 340)
13 days • £3,220
Lecturer: Neil Taylor

Three countries with different languages, diverse histories and distinct cultural identities.

An extensive legacy from German, Polish, Russian and Swedish occupations.

The focus of the tour is history, politics and general culture, rather than art and architecture.

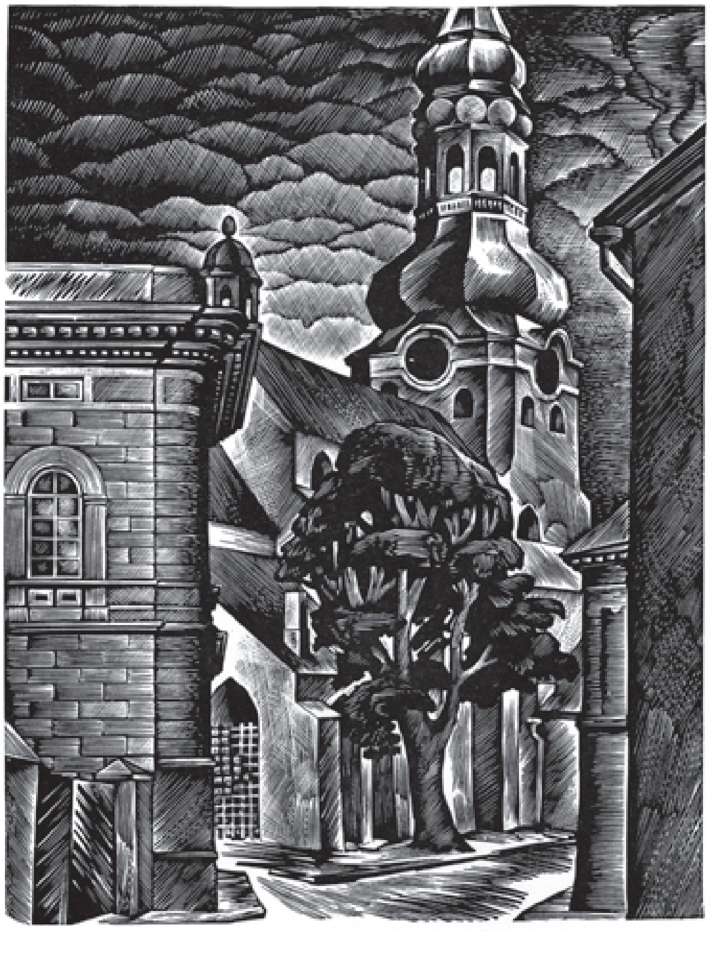
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: the regaining of independence in 1991 by these three states was a happy outcome of the demise of the Soviet Union. Of all the fragments of that former super-power, the Baltic States are perhaps the countries with the brightest future and the least clouded present.

Though geographical proximity leads the countries to be conventionally thought of together as a single entity, the degree of difference between them is surprisingly great in terms of ethnicity, language, historical development and religion.

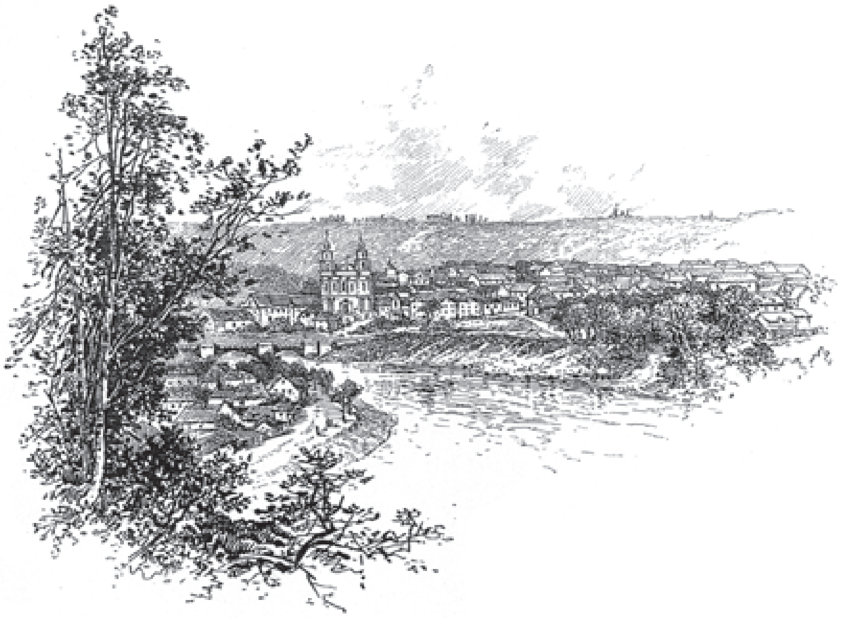
The Estonians are of Finno-Ugric origin and their language has nothing in common with their Latvian or Russian neighbours. Lithuanian history has for much of the post-mediaeval era been linked with Catholic Poland, whereas Estonia and Latvia were early recipients of Protestantism.

In the eighteenth century these states succumbed to the bear-hug of the Russian Empire – and only after the First World War did they achieve full independence. In 1940, with the annexation by the Soviet Union, they once more fell under Russian rule. Between 1941 and 1944 they had the additional suffering of the German Occupation. Yet the Baltic States were always among the most prosperous and liberal of the Soviet republics, and among the most independent-minded.

Surprise ranks high among the responses of the visitor now – surprise that there is so much of interest and beauty, and surprise that the Iron Curtain was indeed so opaque a veil that most of us in the West could remain so ignorant of these countries and their heritage. Surprise, perhaps, that on the whole the region functions with considerable efficiency and sophistication.



Tallinn, 20th-century woodcut.



Vilnius, wood engraving 1889 from 'Russian Pictures'.

Day 1: Tallinn (Estonia). Fly at c. 1.30pm from Gatwick to Tallinn. First of three nights in Tallinn.

Day 2: Lahemaa National Park (Estonia). Drive east into an area now designated as a national park. The charming manor houses of Palmse and Sagadi have full 18th-century classical dress disguising the timber structure. Lunch is in a roadside inn, with wooden buildings – a former postal service station on the road to St Petersburg.

Day 3: Tallinn. The upper town has a striking situation on a steep-sided hill overlooking the Baltic with views over the city. Among the mediaeval and classical buildings are the Toompea Palace (Parliament), Gothic cathedral and late 19th-century Russian cathedral and the 15th-century town hall *(subject to confirmation)*. Continue through the unspoilt streets of the lower town with its mediaeval walls, churches and gabled merchants' houses and see the church of the Holy Ghost and the City Museum. Visit St Nicholas, a Gothic basilica with a museum of mediaeval art.

Day 4: Tartu (Estonia). Drive through a gently undulating mix of woodland and fertile fields, with traditional vernacular farmsteads. Tartu is in some ways the cultural capital of Estonia, the university having been founded in 1632. There are fine 18th- and 19th-century buildings, especially the town hall and university and there is a visit to the restored Jaani church. Overnight Tartu.

Day 5: Cesis (Latvia). Enter Latvia travelling through hilly landscape renowned for its beauty. Cesis is an historic and well-preserved small town with church and ruined castle. Its manor house Ungurmuiza (about 10 miles out of town) is constructed in wood with a baroque façade and interior. The drive continues via Straupe, another attractive village. First of three nights in Riga.

Day 6: Riga (Latvia). Explore Latvia's capital on foot. Within the extensive Old Town there are mediaeval streets, Hanseatic warehouses, Gothic and Baroque churches and 19th-century civic buildings. There are visits to the Menzendorff House, a restored merchant's house and now a museum, Gothic St Peter with its distinctive tall spire and the cathedral, the largest mediaeval church in the Baltic States.

Day 7: Riga. The Art Nouveau district is a residential quarter of grand boulevards, with classical, historicist and outstanding façades. Drive via the market, formerly Europe's largest, situated in five 1920s Zeppelin hangars, followed by a visit to the fascinating outdoor museum of vernacular buildings. Free afternoon to visit the National Art Museum, Occupation Museum or the Jewish Museum.

Day 8: Rundale (Latvia), Siauliai, Kaunas (Lithuania). Rundale was one of the most splendid palaces in the Russian Empire, built from 1736 by Rastrelli for a favourite of Empress Anna. Lunch is in the palace restaurant. Lithuania is entered via the town of Bauska and there is a stop in Kedainiai to visit the regional museum and the mausoleum of Radvila Dukes. First of two nights in Kaunas.

Day 9: Kaunas (Lithuania). A diverse historic town with a wealth of architecture. Near the central square are a number of churches and the Town Museum. The Ciurlionis Art Museum has works of Lithuania's most famous composer and artist. Other afternoon visits include the Resurrection Church and the Synagogue.

Day 10: Pazaislis, Vilnius (Lithuania). At Pazaislis is a magnificent Baroque nunnery and pilgrimage church, one of the architectural gems of Eastern Europe. Continue to Vilnius which, far from the sea, has the feel of a Central European metropolis, with Baroque the predominant style. Afternoon walk to the bishop's palace (now the Presidential Palace), the university, and the Church of St John. First of three nights in Vilnius.

Day 11: Vilnius. Walk to the Gates of Dawn, the Carmelite church of St Theresa, the former Jewish ghetto, the cathedral and the exquisite little Late-Gothic church of St Anne. Visit the church of Saints Peter and Paul with outstanding stucco sculptural decoration and see the Museum of Applied Arts.

Day 12: Vilnius. Kazys Varnelis House Museum is an eclectic private collection of art and maps. The recently opened National Gallery houses 20th and 21st-century Lithuanian art. A free afternoon or an optional visit to the Church Heritage Museum.

Day 13: Vilnius. Fly from Vilnius to London Gatwick, via Riga, arriving c. 12.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,220 (deposit £350)This includes: air travel (economy class) on Air Baltic and Estonian Air flights (Boeing 737);travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 9 dinners (including one light one) with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; tips for restaurant staff, drivers, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and local guides. **Single supplement £360. Price without flights £3,000**.

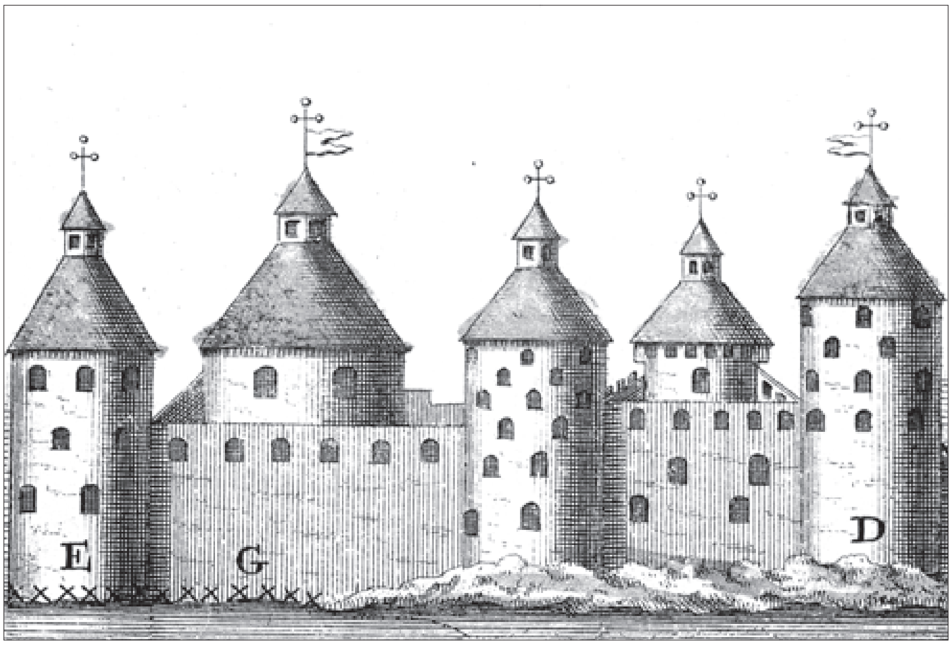
Hotels: in Tallinn (3 nights): a small stylish hotel in a turn-of-the-century building. In Tartu (1 night): centrally located with a good restaurant; decor is quite dated. In Riga (3 nights): a modern well-located hotel with views over the park (but expect some street noise). In Kaunas (2 nights): newly-opened in a 19th-century mansion with modern features. In Vilnius (3 nights): an elegant and comfortable hotel in an excellent location. All hotels have a local 4-star rating with acceptable levels of comfort. Expect showers rather than baths.

How strenuous? A long tour with four hotel changes and some long coach journeys. There is a lot of walking, often on cobbled or roughly paved ground. Average distance by coach per day: 56 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

SAVONLINNA OPERA

AIDA, THE MAGIC FLUTE & LA FENICE OR A CONCERT



Savonlinna, Olavinlinna Castle, 18th-century engraving.

HELSINKI OPERA

October 2012

Details will be available in January 2012. Contact us now to register your interest.

8–12 July 2012 (MY 310)
The Magic Flute • La Fenice • Aida
5 days • £2,580
Lecturer: Simon Rees

14–18 July 2012 (MY 312)
Karita Mattila • The Magic Flute • Aida
5 days • £2,550
Lecturer: Daniel Snowman

Two departures, both include *Aida* (Verdi) and *The Magic Flute* (Mozart). The first also includes *La Fenice* by the leading Finnish contemporary composer Kimmo Hakola, the second a concert with Karita Mattila (soprano).

Flights from Manchester or London to Helsinki and continue to Savonlinna.

Productions at Savonlinna are musically and dramatically first-rate, in the incomparable setting of a mediaeval castle on an island.

A pleasant, small town amidst the unassertive beauty of lakeland Finland.

Contact us for the full details or visit www.martinrandall.com

---

A massive structure of rough-hewn granite rising from a rocky islet, the castle at Savonlinna is the largest in Scandinavia. It was built in 1475 and frequently re-fortified during the next three centuries, for this was border country: Nordic occupancy alternated with Russian until modern times.

Opera has been performed here in the courtyard – under a temporary roof – since 1912, so it even pre-dates Verona as a festival in a spectacular historic setting. During the last couple of decades its artistic achievements have placed this festival among the best in the world, yet its unlikely and rather inaccessible location keeps the number of international visitors well below what it deserves. The first tour offers *La Fenice* by Kimmo Hakola, a contemporary composer whose work attracts interest for its originality and dramatic quality and is by no means unapproachable. Hakola studied under Rautavaara and is regarded as Finland's leading composer, in a country with a strong tradition for contemporary music.

The lake district of eastern Finland is an area of gently beguiling beauty. Thousands of inter-connected lakes meet forests of birch and pine at an incredibly convoluted shoreline, the pattern varied with scattered patches of pasture and arable land neatly arranged around timber farmsteads. The scenery and pure air provide a restful and refreshing foil to nights at the opera.

Visits include: a guided tour of the castle at Savonlinna; a boat trip through beautiful lakeland scenery to the Retretti Art Centre, a remarkable complex with several changing exhibitions; a visit the Punkaharju nature reserve and the Finnish Forest Museum; the largest wooden church in the world (1840s) in Kerimäki.

Itinerary – in brief

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.20am from London Heathrow, or Manchester at c. 10.30am, to Helsinki, and from there to Savonlinna. Transfer to the hotel.

Days 2–4. Visits include: a guided tour of the castle in Savonlinna; a boat trip through beautiful lakeland scenery to the Retretti Art Centre; the Punkaharju nature reserve and the Finnish forest museum; to Kerimäki to see the largest wooden church in the world.

Day 5. Fly from Savonlinna to Helsinki and on to London or Manchester. The flight arrives at Heathrow c. 5.15pm or Manchester at c. 5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,580 (MY 310) or **£2,550** (MY 312) (deposit £250). This includes: music tickets costing c. £420 (MY 310) or £390 (MY 312); air travel (economy class) with Finnair (Airbus 321 and Saab 340); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £340**. **Price without all flights £2,280** (MY 310) or **£2,250** (MY 312).

Opera tickets: not confirmed at the time of going to press.

Hotel: located by the lake in Savonlinna this functional hotel is the best in town. It is basic but adequately equipped and with modern facilities. All rooms (including single rooms) have twin beds.

How strenuous? Access to the castle and the forest walk would be difficult with impaired walking. Average distance by coach per day: 30 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

BRITTANY

MEGALITHS TO MONET

A fishing village in Brittany, etching 1909.

29 May–6 June 2012 (MY 258)
9 days • £2,780
Lecturer: Caroline Holmes

A new tour for 2012.

Brittany's landscapes captured and cultivated: gardens, châteaux and historic towns.

Some of the finest prehistoric sites in Europe.

The inspiration for colonies of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists.

The landscapes of Brittany are variously dramatic, fertile and rugged, framed by jagged coasts or broad sands. The granite bedrock can be seen carved into poignant sixteenth-century churchyard calvaries and piled high in Quimper's two spires. The wealth of stone tools that have been found to confirm the early agricultural skills of prehistoric Bretons. Armorica stems from Ar Mor, literally land of the sea, to distinguish Brittany's coasts from the forested interior, Ar Goat, that sheltered wolves, boar and deer as well as Druidic rites.

Over the centuries the fruits of its sea, fields, orchards and gardens fed their bodies and souls with a robust simplicity. Large tracts remained remote from and largely untouched by metropolitan France. In the late nineteenth century avant-garde artists came to see Britanny as an inspirational rural idyll and flocked from Europe, America and Australia.

It was already popular when in 1888 Paul Sérusier, Emile Bernard and Paul Gauguin formed the School of Pont-Aven. Nearby, Monet painted the wild seas and rocks off Belle-Ile and met the critic who was to become his lifelong friend and biographer, Gustave Geffroy. Australian Impressionist John Peter Russell married Marianna Antoinetta Mattiocco, Rodin's favourite model, and in 1889 built a house at Port Goulphar where they entertained Sisley, Matisse and numerous other artists. In 1894 Sarah Bernhardt took up summer residence in the Fort; her guest list was to include Edward VII.

This tour presents a broad sweep of history, prehistory, art and landscape. It is led by a garden historian and art historian who has close family ties to Brittany.

Itinerary

Day 1. Join the tour in central London at 4.00pm and travel by coach to Portsmouth, or join at Portsmouth Harbour railway station at c. 6.00pm. Take the overnight ferry to St Malo; have dinner and spend the night on board.

Day 2: St Malo. The Heroic Age of Saint Malo came with the discovery of the New World: for 200 years it claimed to be the busiest port in France. After a morning lecture, walk around the exceedingly attractive old centre and visit the ramparts and castle dating to the 13th and 14th centuries. The *malouinières* were the luxurious châteaux built for rich ship-owning merchants in the 17th and 18th centuries as country villas accessible to the city by water or land. Visit the excellent garden of Le Montmarin. Overnight St Malo.

Day 3: Pleyben, Daoulas, Quimper. Pleyben's 16th-century church, triumphal arch and calvary are amongst the finest in Brittany, the sculpture in intractable granite blending technical skill with unidealised naturalism. The Abbaye de Daoulas has a good Romanesque cloister and monastically inspired herb gardens. Well situated at crossroads between sea and land, Quimper is the capital of the Cornouaille region. First of three nights in Quimper.

Day 4: Quimper. The cathedral of St Corentin is the finest example of Gothic architecture in Brittany, with a sumptuous modern high altar in gilded and enamelled bronze. The Musée des Beaux Arts contains paintings by Dutch, Flemish and Italian artists and an exceptional collection of French paintings and drawings including 19th-century Breton scenes. In 1690 Jean-Baptiste Bousquet created the first *faïencerie* or pottery in the Locmaria district. Visit the workshop now owned by HB-Henriot. A fine selection of pottery as well as archaeological finds and local arts and crafts are housed in the Musée Départemental Breton.

Day 5: around Quimper. An excursion to three very different gardens – plantsman, breeder and family. Those of the Parc Botanique de Cornouaille were started in 1983 by M. Gueguen, a plant collector who worked for Hilliers in England. The Parc de Boutiguéry extends to 15 hectares along the banks of the River Odet where new, warm colours have been bred into the rhododendrons. At the Manoir de Kérazan sweet chestnuts grow alongside pines, palms and flowering shrubs. The house is a showcase of Breton workmanship: fine collections of the Quimper *faïencerie*, Bigouden furniture and paintings by local artists.

Day 6: Pont-Aven, Carnac. Towards the end of the 19th century, Pont-Aven was almost overrun by avant-garde and aspiring artists. The small Musée des Beaux Arts contains works by Gauguin, fellow members of the School of Pont-Aven and other artists spanning the period 1850-1950. The chapel of Trémalo still harbours the 16th-century polychrome statue that inspired Gauguin's *Le Christ Jaune.* Guided tour of the extraordinary wealth of orthostats (upright stones) and menhirs (standing stones) dating to c. 4600 BC in the vicinity of Carnac. Overnight Carnac.

Day 7: Ile de Gavrinis, Locmariaquer. The 23 orthostats in the Cairn de l'Ile de Gavrinis have a wealth of symbolic patterns unmatched elsewhere. There are other stones at the Table des Marchands at nearby Locmariaquer. Catch the late afternoon ferry to Belle-Ile. Evening walk in the footsteps of Monet to view the jagged Aiguilles de Port-Coton. Two nights are spent in Belle-Ile: the hotel is on the site of Australian painter John Russell's house and retains the views which inspired him to live, paint and host here for twenty years.

Day 8: Belle-Ile. Optional morning walk along the beautiful northern *Côte Sauvage* (c. 8 km), during which we visit the Musée Sarah Bernhardt and the fort that was her summer home at the Pointe des Poulains. Lunch in the small port of Sauzon. Return via the Jardin de Boulaye that nestles in the sheltered heart of the islands. Overnight Belle-Ile.

Day 9. Return by ferry to mainland France and transfer by coach to Nantes for a flight to London City Airport, arriving c. 4.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,780 (deposit £300); this includes: overnight with Brittany Ferries, Cityjet flight (economy class, Fokker 50), coach travel, return ferry to Belle-Ile; accommodation as below; breakfasts and 7 dinners with drinks; all admission to gardens, museums, sites etc.; tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all state taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £315** (double room for sole use). **Contact us for a price without international ferry travel and flight.**

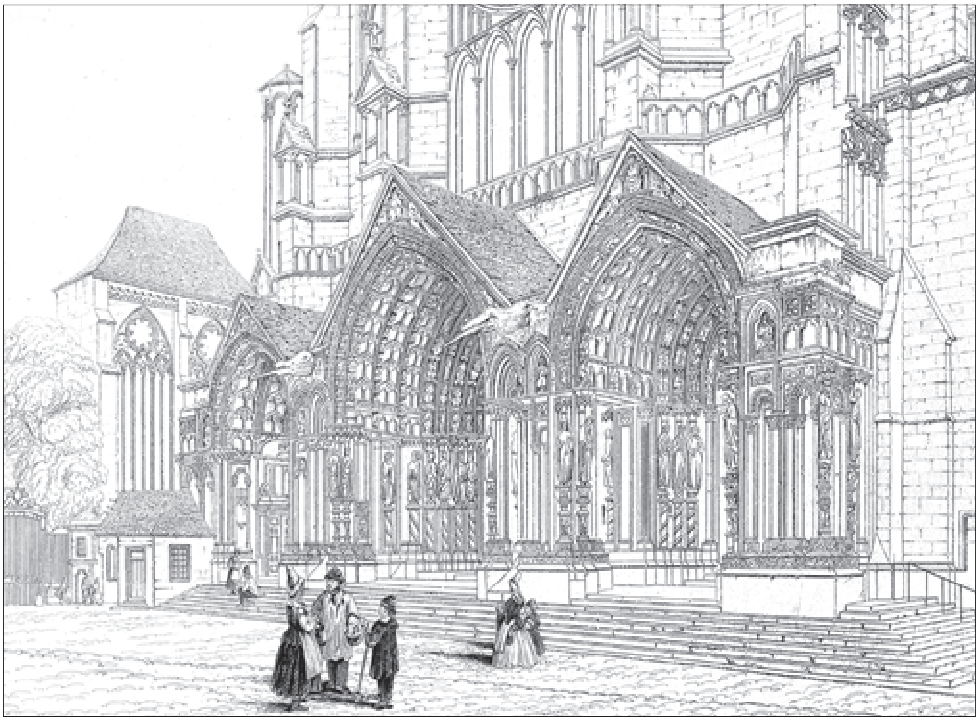
Hotels. The first night is on a large, modern ferry. We have reserved suites for people travelling in pairs, which are quite spacious with sitting area and an outside window. For single travellers we have booked small twins which are simple but adequately comfortable with en suite facilities and an outside window. In St Malo (1 night): a 4-star business hotel located just outside the old city walls. Rooms are modern, well appointed and comfortable. In Quimper (3 nights): a 3-star hotel five minutes from the cathedral and museums. In Carnac (1 night): a 3-star hotel with an outdoor pool and excellent restaurant. On Belle-Ile (2 nights): a spa hotel, a member of the Relais and Châteaux group, with fine coastal views.

How strenuous? A lot of walking and standing around. Three hotel changes plus one night on a ferry. Sure-footedness and walking shoes are essential for the (optional) walk on Belle-Ile. Average distance by coach per day: 60 miles.

Small group: between 10 to 22 participants.

FRENCH GOTHIC

THE CATHEDRALS OF NORTHERN FRANCE



Chartres Cathedral, steel engraving c. 1840.

16–22 April 2012 (MY 214)
7 days • £1,980
Lecturer: Dr Tom Nickson

Perhaps the most coherent and consistently excellent group of great buildings in Europe.

The key monuments in the development of Gothic, with a whole day for Chartres.

Gothic was the only architectural style which had its origins in northern Europe. It was in the north of France that the first Gothic buildings arose, it was here that the style attained its classic maturity, and it is here that its greatest manifestations still stand.

From the middle of the twelfth century the region was the scene of unparalleled building activity, with dozens of cathedrals, churches and abbeys under construction. Architects stretched their imaginations and masons extended their skills to devise more daring ways of enclosing greater volumes of space, with increasingly slender structural supports, and larger areas of window.

But Gothic is not only an architectural phenomenon. Windows were filled with brilliant coloured glass. Sculpture, more life-like than for nearly a thousand years yet increasingly integrated with its architectural setting, was abundant. The art of metalwork thrived, and paint was everywhere. All the arts were coordinated to interpret and present elaborate theological programmes to congregations which included both the illiterate lay people and sophisticated clerics.

Nearly all the most important buildings in the development of the Early and High phases of Gothic are included, and the order of visits even follows this development chronologically, as far as geography allows. A whole day is dedicated to the cathedral at Chartres, the premier site of the building arts of the mediaeval world.

Itinerary

Day 1. Travel by Eurostar at c. 12.30pm from St Pancras to Paris. Continue by coach to Laon and the hotel, in an attractive lakeside setting. First of three nights near Laon.

Day 2: Noyon, Laon. One of the earliest Gothic cathedrals (c. 1150), Noyon's four-storey internal elevation marks the transition from the thick-walled architecture of the Romanesque to the thin-walled verticality of Gothic. Laon is spectacularly sited on a rock outcrop. Begun c. 1160, the cathedral is the most complete of Early Gothic churches and one of the most impressive, with five soaring towers.

Day 3: Rheims, Soissons. Rheims Cathedral, the coronation church of the French monarchy, begun 1211, is a landmark in the development of High Gothic with the first appearance of bar tracery and classicizing portal sculpture. At the church of St Rémi the heavy Romanesque nave contrasts with the light Early Gothic choir. Soissons Cathedral is a fine example of the rapid changes which took place in architecture at the end of the 12th century.

Day 4: St Denis. On the outskirts of Paris, the burial place of French kings, St Denis was an abbey of the highest significance in politics and in the history of architecture. In the 1140s the choir was rebuilt, and the pointed arches, rib vaulting and skeletal structure warrant the claim that this was the first Gothic building. 100 years later the new nave inaugurated the Rayonnant style of Gothic with windows occupying the maximum possible area. First of two nights in Chartres.

Day 5: Chartres. The cathedral at Chartres, begun in 1145 and recommenced in 1195 after a fire, is the finest synthesis of Gothic art and architecture. Sculpture and stained glass are incorporated into an elaborate theological programme, creating a whole which is far greater than the sum of its parts. The full day here provides time for unhurried exploration of the building and space to reflect and absorb. See also the church of St Pierre.

Day 6: Mantes-la-Jolie, Beauvais, Amiens. Visit the 12th-century collegiate church at Mantes-la-Jolie. Beauvais Cathedral, begun 1225, was, with a vault height in the choir of 157 feet, the climax in France of upwardly aspiring Gothic architecture and the highest vault of mediaeval Europe. Overnight Amiens.

Day 7: Amiens. The cathedral in Amiens is the classic High Gothic structure, its thrilling verticality balanced by measured horizontal movement. Drive to Paris for the Eurostar to London St Pancras, arriving c. 6.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,980 (deposit £200). This includes: Eurostar (1st class, standard premier); private coach in France; accommodation as below; breakfasts and 5 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £190** (double room for sole use). **Price without Eurostar £1,780.**

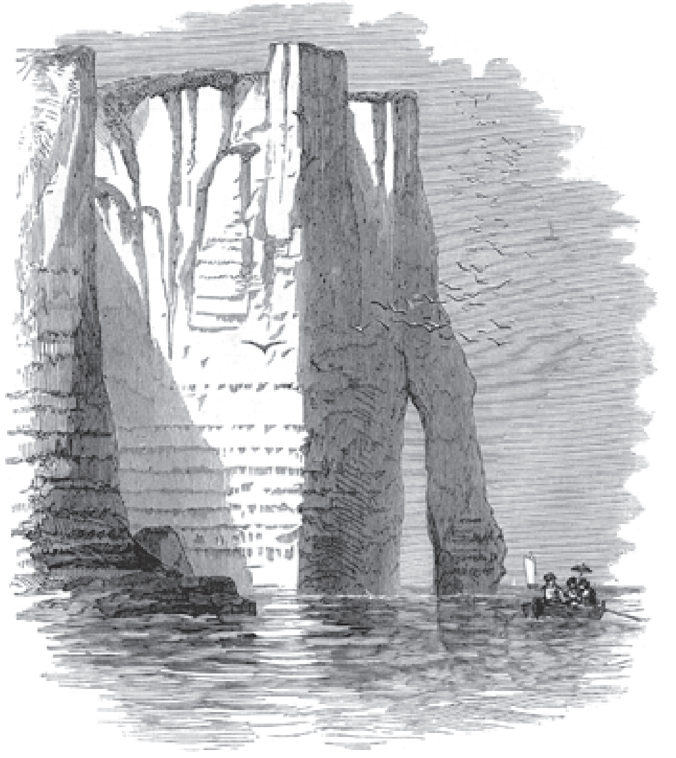
Hotels: Chamouille (3 nights): a few kilometres from Laon, a comfortable 3-star hotel in an attractive position beside a lake. Chartres (2 nights): centrally located 3-star hotel; rooms differ in size and decor. Amiens (1 night): new 3-star hotel; close to the cathedral.

How strenuous? A fair amount of walking and standing around. Some long coach journeys. You should be able to lift your luggage on and off the train. Average distance by coach per day: 108 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

The history of Impressionism

Paintings & places in Paris & Normandy



Étretat, wood engraving c. 1885 from 'The Illustrated London News'.

15–20 April 2012 (MY 209)
6 days • £2,120
Lecturer: Dr Frances Fowle

2–7 September 2012 (MZ 357)
6 days • £2,120
Lecturer: Chloe Johnson

The finest collections of Impressionism in France, and places associated with the artists.

Visit the recently renovated Impressionist galleries of the Musée d'Orsay.

First-class rail travel by Eurostar from London and good hotels in both cities.

Far more Impressionist pictures can be seen in the region covered by this tour than in any other territory of comparable size. This should be no surprise, as this is the region where Impressionism was born and where it was most practised, and the tour visits some of the key sites in that development. Attention is also paid to the precursors – Pre-Impressionists such as Eugène Boudin and Jongkind – and to some Post-Impressionist successors.

As it was for mainstream artists, so it was for rebels and innovators: throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Paris was the centre of the art world. All the French Impressionists spent time here, many lived here for most of their lives.

Yet the essence of their art – the recording of the world about them as it presented itself to their eyes in its immediate, transitory aspect – required them to spend time in the countryside. And the countryside they frequented most was in the north and north-west of Paris, the broad valley of the meandering Seine and of its tributaries the Oise and the Epte, and on to the coast.

This can be illustrated by the case of Claude Monet, the most consistent exponent of Impressionism. He was born in Paris in 1840 and was brought up from 1845 in Le Havre on the Normandy coast before returning to Paris to study painting. Though Paris remained the centre of his artistic world, he made frequent painting expeditions to river and sea, and from 1871 he made his homes in the suburbs, progressively further downstream at Argenteuil, Vétheuil, Poissy and finally, in 1883, at Giverny.

Impressionism was developing at the same time as seaside tourism on France's northern coast (the Mediterranean was not a holiday destination until later) and the relationship between the two is fascinating. Water, fresh or salt, was an important ingredient of Impressionist pictures, its fleeting, changing, evanescent qualities similar to the characteristics of light they sought to capture on canvas. The Impressionist emphasis on the importance of painting *en plein air* makes a tour that includes sites where painters set up their easel particularly rewarding.

Most of the world's greatest collections of Impressionism are located in this region, and many of the art museums visited have been refurbished and extended. The Musée d'Orsay is due to open its newly renovated Impressionist galleries in autumn 2011.

Itinerary

Day 1: Paris. Leave London St Pancras at c. 10.30am by Eurostar. In Paris visit the Musée Marmottan which, through a donation by Monet's son, has one of the world's largest collections of Impressionists including *Impression: Sunrise*. Continue to Rouen in Normandy where four nights are spent.

Day 2: Honfleur, Le Havre. Honfleur is an utterly delightful fishing village at the mouth of the Seine, now crammed with art galleries and antique shops. In the museum are many works by Eugène Boudin, a major influence on the Impressionists. Cross the Seine estuary to Le Havre. After a recent donation and refurbishment, the Musée André Malraux has become the second largest collection of Impressionists in France. Overnight Rouen.

Day 3: Giverny. The morning is devoted to the premier site in the history of Impressionism, Monet's house and garden at Giverny where he lived from 1883 until his death in 1926, designing and tending the gardens which grew in size as his prosperity increased. Also at Giverny is the newly reconstituted Musée des Impressionismes (formerly Le Musée d'Art Américain) with fine temporary exhibitions. Return in the mid-afternoon to Rouen to study the cathedral, the subject of over 30 of Monet's paintings. Overnight Rouen.

Day 4: Rouen, Étretat. Spend the morning in Rouen at the Musée des Beaux Arts, which has some good Impressionist paintings in its permanent collection. Either spend a free afternoon in Rouen, architecturally and scenically one of France's finest cities, or join an excursion to Étretat, a little seaside town flanked by dramatic chalk promontories scooped into arches by wind and sea, painted by Monet and many others. Overnight Rouen.

Day 5: Auvers, Paris. Auvers-sur-Oise was a popular artists' colony, frequented by Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. See sights associated with Van Gogh, who spent the last few weeks of his life here, and the studio of Daubigny. Return to Paris and visit the Musée des Beaux Arts in the Petit Palais, an under-appreciated collection for which space has recently been expanded. Overnight Paris.

Day 6: Paris. Walk through the Tuileries Gardens to the Orangerie where an excellent collection of Impressionists, Monet's famous water-lilies and 20th-century paintings are housed. Cross the river to the Musée d'Orsay; here, in newly renovated galleries, are displayed not only the world's finest collection of Impressionism but also masterpieces by important precursors such as Courbet and Millet. Return to London by Eurostar, arriving St Pancras at c. 5.30pm.

Etching by Renoir.

Practicalities

Price: £2,120 (deposit £200). This includes: travel (1st class, standard premier) on Eurostar; private coach within France; accommodation; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £320** (double for sole use). **Price without Eurostar £1,920.**

Hotels: Rouen (4 nights): a newly opened 5-star hotel in the historic centre of Rouen. Décor is modern and rooms vary in size. Paris (1 night) comfortable 4-star hotel with an excellent location near the Louvre. Refurbished in a traditional style. Good brasserie.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking, particularly in the town centres, as well as standing in art galleries. There are also some long drives. You will need to lift your luggage on and off the train and wheel it within stations. Average distance by coach per day: 82 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

POETS & THE SOMME

POETRY OF THE GREAT WAR IN BATTLEFIELD CONTEXT

British troops on the Western Front, photograph 1916 in 'World War 1914–1918: A Pictured History'.

7–10 September 2012 (MZ 359)
4 days • £1,450
Lecturer: Andrew Spooner

First World War poetry in the context of the Battle of the Somme and the lives (and deaths) of the poets.

A presentation of the poetry through a study of events, landscapes and the wartime lives of individual poets. An actor reads the poems.

First-class rail travel.

Blending history and poetry, this tour reveals the true landscape of war: locations, topography, events, but also hope, fear, anger, pain and love, all viscerally manifest in the poetry of the First World War.

The opening day of the Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916, is taken as the starting point for the tour, with an exploration of the front line area and a study of the events of that day. This leads on to a wider examination of the nature of trench warfare and of the course of the war as a whole. Much has survived: trenches, shell holes and mine craters. The tangible remains of warfare and the pattern of cemeteries are now woven into the fabric of the modern landscape.

What sets this tour apart is the parallel exploration of the lives of those regular soldiers, volunteers and civilians who bequeathed to us the most emotionally potent body of poetry in English literature. This is not an exercise in literary analysis, however, but poems are placed in the context of the battlefield and of the lives (and deaths) of the many and varied individuals who wrote them.

Led by the military historian who devised the tour, Andrew Spooner, it is also accompanied by an actor who reads the poems – sometimes at the site where they were composed (often identifiable to within a few yards), sometimes at the scene of the poet's grave, sometimes at the place of his death or disappearance.

The tour is very much 'in the field' with a series of short walks on each day, averaging from a few hundred metres to a maximum distance 1.5 miles, and set to follow the events on particular sections of the front line. The fourteen miles of front line are neatly divided by the Roman road from Albert to Bapaume.

Poets whose works are included are (in alphabetical order) Richard Aldington, Lawrence Binyon, Edmund Blunden, Vera Brittain, Eric Chilman, Eleanor Farjeon, Wilfred Gibson, Sir Alan P Herbert, William Noel Hodgson, Roland Leighton, Frederick Manning, Lucy Gertrude Moberley, Wilfred Owen, Margaret Postgate Cole, John Edgell Rickwood, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon, Alan Seeger, Charles Sorley, Hugh Steward Smith, John William Streets, Edward Thomas, Alec Waugh, May Wedderburn Cannan.

Itinerary

Day 1: Foncquevillers, Pozières. Travel by Eurostar at c. 10.00am from London St Pancras to Lille. Continue by coach arriving in the field early afternoon. Drive the length of the front line for an initial orientation of the Somme battlefield, identifying the exact positions of the opposing trenches. The lecturer gives an introduction at the windmill site at Pozières, the highest part of the battlefield, and the first poem is read; Alec Waugh's *Albert to Bapaume Road*. Visit preserved trenches and a military cemetery. Drive to the hotel in Arras.

Day 2: Serre, Mesnil, Thiepval. Explore to the north of the Albert to Bapaume Road. Start at the village of Serre, site of the left flank of the main attack on 1st July where many of the assault battalions were known as 'pals', reflecting their recruiting centres based in the large urban cities of the Midlands and the North. Move along the line through Auchenvillers, along the Ancre Valley, with Edmund Blunden, Wilfred Owen and A.P. Herbert. At Thiepval is the Memorial to the Missing, the most monumental of the many Great War memorials which bears over 72,000 names. Today's poems include *A soldier's funeral* by John William Streets, read at his graveside, Binyon's *For the Fallen* and, at Thiepval, Charles Sorley's *When they see the millions of the mouthless dead / Across your dreams in pale battalions go*.

Day 3: Peronne, Longueval, Mametz. Start at the 'Historial de la Grande Guerre' museum at Peronne, then to the area south of the Albert to Bapaume Road where some success was achieved on 1st July but at high cost. The site of Siegfried Sassoon's HQ dugout is near the village of Fricourt, 'while time ticks blank and busy on their wrists'. At Mametz, on William Noel Hodgson's 'familiar hill', read *Before Action*: 'Must say goodbye to all of this / By all delights that I shall miss, / Help me to die, O Lord.'

Day 4: Contay, Louvencourt. Stray behind the lines, visiting areas associated with the Casualty Clearing Stations. The villages of Louvencourt, Contay and Couin provide locations appropriate to read the choice of women's poetry, Vera Brittain and May Wedderburn Cannan. At La Boisselle, astride the Roman road, follow the fortunes of two battalions of the 34th Division. The poetry of Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas and Alan Seeger features (*I have a rendezvous with death*). Final lunch before taking the Eurostar to London, arriving c. 5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,450 (deposit £200). This includes: return rail travel by Eurostar (first class, standard premier) from London to Lille (times confirmed 3 months before departure); coach within France; accommodation as described below; all meals with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and poetry reader. **Single supplement £130** (double for sole use)**. Price without Eurostar £1,250.**

Hotel: a traditional 3-star hotel in Arras, installed in a 16th-century building. Rooms vary in size and decoration. Good restaurant.

How strenuous? There is a quite a lot of walking, most of it over rough ground. You will need to lift your luggage on and off the train and wheel it within stations. Average distance by coach per day: 122 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

OPERA IN PARIS

BIZET, PROKOFIEV, RAMEAU

21–25 June 2012 (MY 290)
5 days • £2,680
(including tickets to 3 operas)
Lecturer: Roderick Swanston

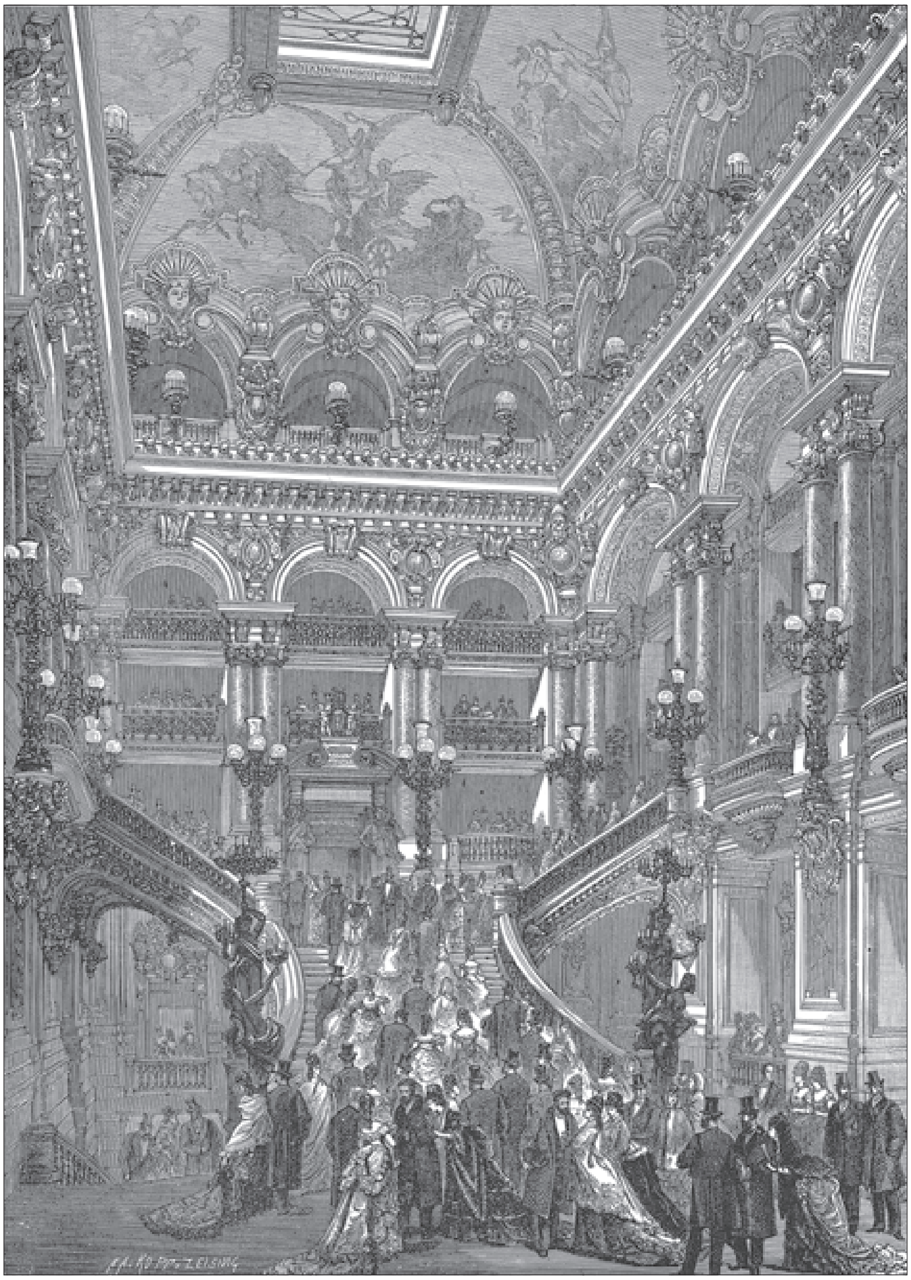
Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles;* Prokofiev's *L'Amour des Trois Oranges;* Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie.*

Three contrasting venues: Opéra Comique, Palais Garnier and Opéra Bastille.

Two guided visits to places of musical interest but otherwise plenty of free time between lectures and performances.

First class rail travel to Paris.

Palais Garnier, wood engraving c. 1890.



For much of the 19th century Paris was the opera capital of the world. There the most famous singers appeared and some of the most spectacular productions were staged. This was the home of grand opera, the city to which Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, Verdi and Wagner came knowing that success in Paris was essential.

In the mid-19th century some French composers fared less well than visitors, though even Wagner was not much welcomed at first. Gounod was successful, while Berlioz's operas were largely ignored. Even Bizet's *Carmen* only gained success after it was performed in Vienna. Yet, the opening of the Palais Garnier in the 1870s heralded a golden age of French music in general and opera in particular. Paris was once again an operatic city to be reckoned with, hosting the operas of Dukas, Massenet, Chabrier, Debussy and others.

There will be three operas, perfectly placed in the three main Parisian operatic houses.

At the Opéra Comique, Bizet's *Les Pêcheurs de Perles,* premièred in Paris' Théâtre Lyrique in 1863. Success came slowly to this opera which is set in Ceylon about two young men in love with the same woman. The libretto creaks but the music scorches especially the famous duet 'Au fond du temple saint'. It is said the manager of the Théâtre Lyrique told Bizet that had he known he was going to write such good music he would have given him another libretto.

In the airy modern space of the Opéra Bastille see Prokofiev's *L'Amour des Trois Oranges.* It is a satirical opera, which premiered in Chicago in 1921. Its inception was international as the French libretto is based on a Russian translation of an Italian play. Tongues are never out of cheeks during this witty opera which is about a young prince, overwhelmed with sadness due to his over-indulgence in tragic poetry, being made to laugh by various Commedia dell'arte characters. Love comes and happiness comes to him eventually through his opening three magic oranges. The most famous number from the opera is its march.

Finally at the opulent Opéra Garnier, Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*. This great tragédie-lyrique was premiered in 1733 when its composer was 50 and this opera was his first. Based on Racine's *Phèdre* the opera powerfully portrays the obsessive love of Phèdre for Hippolyte, the son of her husband Theseus, whom she thinks dead. Hippolyte in turn loves Aricie. Different gods back different characters, and Rameau explored some daring new harmonic devices for the trio of 'Parques' (Fates), but the lasting impression of the opera is magnificent dilemma of Queen Phèdre torn by inner demons and forging her own ill fate.

In addition to these evening operas, we visit other sites associated with the rich musical and operatic history of Paris, including the Opéra Garnier and the music museum at La Villette.

Itinerary

Day 1. Eurostar at c. 10.30am from London St Pancras to Paris. By coach to the hotel. Some free time before dinner.

Day 2. Morning lecture and guided visit of the Opéra Garnier. Free afternoon, with an opportunity to visit the Louvre. *Evening opera at the Opéra Comique: **Les Pêcheurs de perles** (Bizet), Leo Hussain (conductor), Yoshi Oïda (director), l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio*

France, Sonya Yoncheva (Leïla), Dmitry Korchak (Nadir), André Heyboer (Zurga), Nicolas Testé (Nourabad).

Day 3. Free day with a late afternoon lecture and dinner before the *evening opera at the Bastille:* ***L'Amour des trois oranges*** *(Prokofiev), Alain Altinoglu (conductor), Gilbert Deflo (director), Orchestra and Chorus of the Opéra National de Paris, Alain Vernhes (Le Roi de Trèfle), Charles Workman (Le Prince), Patricia Fernandez (La Princesse Clarice).*

Day 4. Morning lecture and some free time. Afternoon excursion to Porte de la Villette to visit the Cité de la Musique concert hall, designed by Christian de Pontzamparc, and the music museum. *Evening opera at the Palais Garnier:* ***Hippolyte et Aricie*** *(Rameau), Emmanuelle Haïm (conductor), Ivan Alexandre (director), Orchestre et choeur du Concert d'Astrée, Sarah Conolly (Phèdre), Anne-Catherine Gillet (Aricie).*

Day 5. Coach transfer to the Gare du Nord. The Eurostar to St Pancras arrives c. 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,680 (deposit £250). This includes: three top category opera tickets costing c. £390; return rail travel (first class, standard premier) by Eurostar from London to Paris; private coach for transfers; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with water, wine, coffee; all gratuities; all state taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £440** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without Eurostar £2,470.**

Hotel: excellently located a few minutes away from the Louvre and a short walk from the Opéra Comique and Opéra Garnier. A 4-star grand hôtel, although rooms are small. Parisian style brasserie, good breakfasts.

How strenuous? Two of the performances are reached on foot. Visits require a fair amount of walking and standing around. There are some late nights but starts are leisurely. You need to be able to lift your luggage on and off the train.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

CÉZANNE IN PARIS

TOGETHER WITH THE STEINS EXHIBITION

12–15 January 2012 (MY 155)
4 days • £1,550
Lecturer: Dr Sarah Wilson

A new tour for 2012.

A tour combining two major exhibitions in Paris: *Cézanne in Paris* at the newly renovated Musée du Luxembourg and *The Steins, or the Invention of Modern Art* at the Grand Palais.

Visits to other modern collections, including the Musée d'Orsay and the Centre Pompidou.

Led by Britain's greatest expert on twentieth-century French art.

'The capital of the nineteenth century' was how the German philosopher Walter Benjamin described the Paris of Napoleon III and the Belle Epoque and, for more than 100 years, the city was a magnet for the ambitious, the intellectually inclined and the talented. Amongst the most brilliant and influential of its immigrants were Paul Cézanne, the son of a Provençal banker, and siblings Gertrude and Leo Stein, the offspring of a wealthy American family. All three played a critical role in the history of modern art.

Cezanne arrived in Paris in 1861 determined to make his way as a painter. The 22-year-old former law student quickly joined the circle of Impressionist painters and began a radical new approach to colour, light and landscape. Though he returned to his beloved Aix in the early 1880s still largely unknown, he understood that only Paris could confer recognition. By the end of the decade, he had once again settled in the capital and, in 1895, the influential dealer Ambroise Vollard mounted a solo show which established him as a leading figure of the avant-garde.

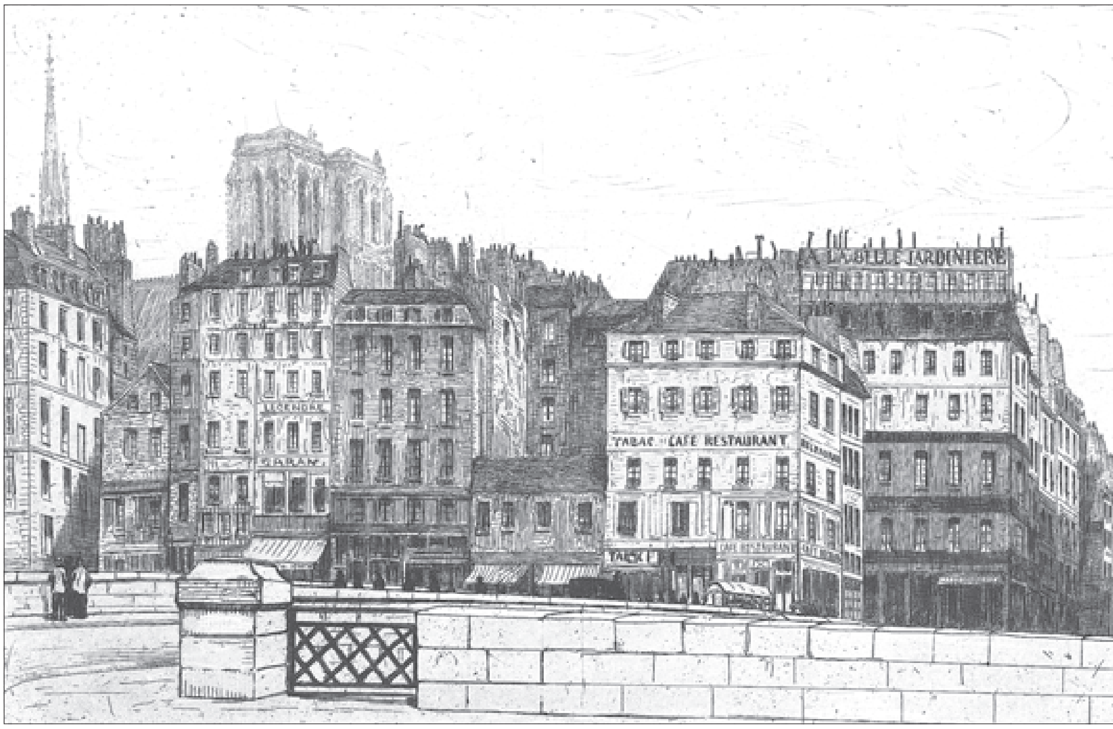
It was through Vollard that the young Steins, newly arrived from New York in 1904, bought their first Cézanne, as well as works by Renoir, Matisse and Picasso. Their rapidly and enthusiastically acquired collection became essential viewing both for artists and those who wished to understand the work of this exciting new generation. The interest the collection generated was to disseminate this revolutionary aesthetic around the world.

Itinerary

Day 1. Leave at c. 10.30am by Eurostar from London St Pancras to Paris Gare du Nord. Visit the refurbished Centre Pompidou (Richard Rogers & Renzo Piano), France's finest collection of modern art.

Day 2. After a lecture, the morning is dedicated to *The Steins, or the Invention of Modern Art* at the Grand Palais. Around 120 works from the family's extraordinary collection will be on display, and their personalities examined. The afternoon is spent at the Musée d'Orsay where the world's finest Impressionist and Post-Impressionist collection is displayed in newly renovated galleries.

Day 3. A lecture precedes the visit to the Musée du Luxembourg, recently re-opened after extensive renovation work. The exhibition



Cézanne in Paris studies the works created by the artist on his frequent trips to the capital and how his presence here led to his establishment on the modern art scene. In the afternoon visit the Musée de l'Orangerie where Monet's *Nympheas* are exhibited alongside works by Cézanne, Renoir, Matisse, Picasso and Derain.

Day 4. The Musée Rodin is the artist's house and studio which contains many of his famous works as well as art by contemporaries. Finish with the often overlooked Musée de l'Art Moderne, a municipal museum with a collection of Fauvist and Cubist works. Return to London by Eurostar, arriving at c. 5.30pm.

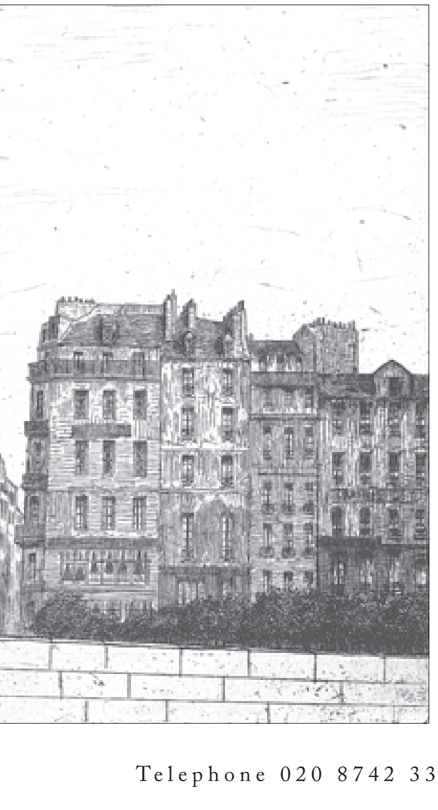
Practicalities

Price: £1,550 (deposit £200). This includes: Eurostar (first class, standard premier); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all state taxes; the services of the lecturer; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £275** (double room for sole use). **Price without Eurostar £1,340.**

Hotel: excellently located a few minutes away from the Louvre. A 4-star grand hôtel, although rooms are small. Parisian style brasserie, good breakfasts.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking and a lot of standing in galleries.

Small group: between 10 and 20 participants.



Île de la Cité, etching 1869.

Matisse & his World

Art in Paris & Northern France

6–9 June 2012 (MY 270)
4 days • £1,630
Lecturer: Monica Bohm-Duchen

A new tour for 2012.

Specially devised to visit the exhibition *Matisse: Odds and Evens* at the Centre Pompidou.

Visit Le Cateau-Cambrésis, Matisse's birthplace in the Pas-de-Calais region and site of a Museum largely devoted to the artist.

First-class travel by Eurostar.

The centrepiece of this new and special short tour to northern France will be a major temporary exhibition at the Pompidou Centre entitled *Matisse: Odds and Evens*, which will comprise some sixty paintings and thirty works on paper drawn from collections around the world, and focus on the seductive patterns and themes that run like a thread through Matisse's long career.

Combined with this is a visit to the attractive town of Le Cateau-Cambrésis, where Matisse was born in 1869 and which is home to an important museum dedicated to his work in the handsome Palais Fénelon. Established by Matisse himself in 1952, it now owns the third largest collection of the artist's work in France. As well as some 170 works by Matisse, it also houses a substantial collection of the work of Auguste Herbin, of artists' books donated by the important avant-garde publisher Tériade and of photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson. At the local primary school, named after the artist, is a stained glass window entitled *Les Abeilles* (The Bees) that was originally created for his Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence.

In Paris, we spend ample time at the Pompidou Centre to enable us not just to enjoy the Matisse exhibition to the full but also to view its magnificent permanent collection of early 20th century art. A visit to the fascinating Musée Gustave Moreau will give us a vivid insight into the life and work of Matisse's most important teacher; while another, to the Musée Rodin, will throw light on Matisse's beginnings as a sculptor. A visit to the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris will expand our knowledge of the work of Matisse's contemporaries, as will the Musée de l'Orangerie where Monet's famous *Nymphéas* (Waterlilies) are on display – like Matisse's best work, it is triumphant proof of the need for beauty in an uncertain world.

Itinerary

Day 1: Le Cateau-Cambrésis, Arras. Take the Eurostar at c. 11.00am from London St Pancras to Lille. The afternoon is spent in Le Cateau–Cambrésis, visiting the Matisse Museum and *Les Abeilles* window. Continue to Arras where one night is spent.

Day 2: Paris. Drive to central Paris and after lunch visit the Musée Gustave Moreau, where the artist who taught Matisse in the 1890s lived and worked. Continue to Montmartre, centre of bohemian artistic life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Overnight Paris.

Day 3: Paris. The morning is devoted to the Matisse exhibition at the Centre Pompidou. This unusual exhibition will illustrate the way in which variations on key themes and patterns form a leitmotif in Matisse's oeuvre. There is also the opportunity to set his work in context by viewing work by his contemporaries (Derain, Picasso, Braque, to name just a few). The afternoon is spent at the Musée Rodin, important for the understanding of Matisse's early sculpture. Overnight Paris.

Day 4: Paris. The morning is spent at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, now – unjustly – somewhat eclipsed by the Centre Pompidou and which currently owns over twenty works by Matisse. The final visit is to the Musée de l'Orangerie, which houses not only a small but fine collection of work by the École de Paris but also Claude Monet's ravishing *Nymphéas*. Take the Eurostar from Paris arriving London St Pancras at c. 5.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,630 (deposit £200). This includes: rail travel by Eurostar (first class, standard premier) from London to Lille and back from Paris (times confirmed 3 months before departure); coach travel within France; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to museums etc.; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all state taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £220** (double room for sole use). **Price without rail travel by Eurostar £1,430.**

Hotels: In Arras (1 night) a traditional 3-star hotel installed in a 16th-century building. Rooms vary in size and decoration. In Paris (2 nights) a comfortable 4-star hotel with an excellent location near the Louvre, refurbished in a traditional style. Good brasserie.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking and standing around in museums. Two full days on foot in Paris and one long coach journey. Average distance by coach per day: 56 miles (90 km).

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

MEDIAEVAL BURGUNDY

ABBEYS & CHURCHES OF THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES

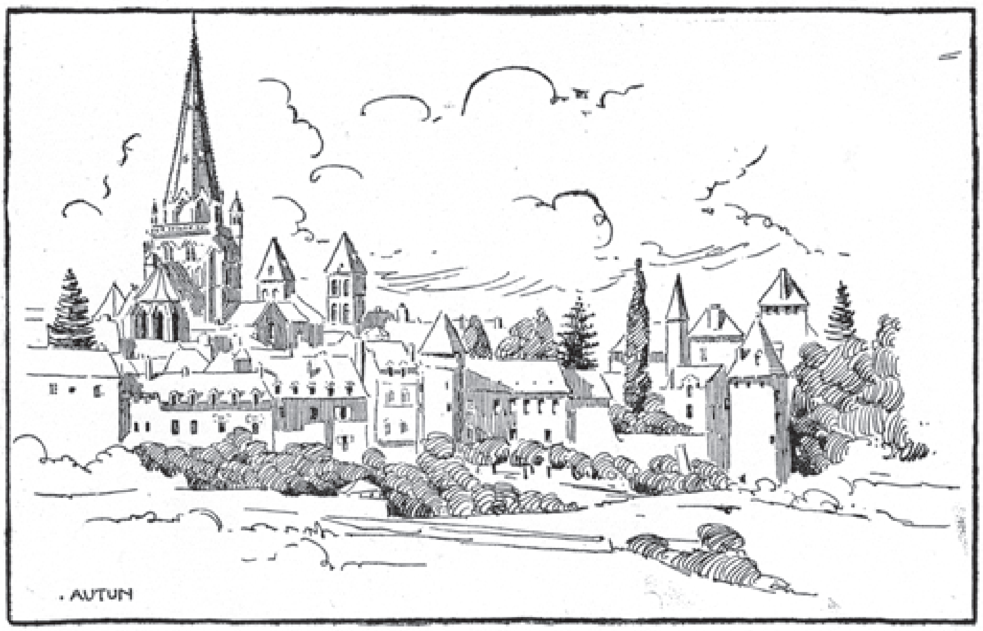
9–16 June 2012 (MY 275)
8 days • £2,260
Lecturer: John McNeill

Superb collection of Romanesque and early Gothic buildings.

Exceptionally well-preserved historic towns.

Rural drives through beautiful landscapes.

First class rail travel on Eurostar and TGV.



Autun, after Percy Allen 1912.

The key to understanding mediaeval Burgundy is its situation, a cradle of wooded hills drained by three great river systems flowing, respectively, to the north, south and west. Not only did this lend the area the status of a *lieu de passage*, but it guaranteed its importance, ensuring that the mediaeval duchy was open to the forms and traditions of far-flung regions.

Remarkably much of Burgundy's mediaeval infrastructure survives. Even extending back as far as the ninth century, for in the interlocking spaces of the lower church at St-Germain d'Auxerre one might catch a glimpse of western Carolingian architecture and painting, a glimpse that presents this most distant of periods at its most inventive and personal.

It is equally the case that while the great early Romanesque basilicas which once studded the underbelly of the Ile-de-France are now reduced to a ghost of their former selves, what survives in Burgundy is sublimely impressive, as one might see in that great quartet of crypts at Dijon, Auxerre, Flavigny and Tournus.

As elsewhere, the twelfth century is well represented, though the depth of exploratory work undertaken here cannot fail to impress. The fundamental Romanesque research was probably conducted to the south, at Cluny and in the Brionnais, but the take-up in central Burgundy was immediate, and in the naves of Vézelay and Autun one might see two of the most compelling essays on the interaction of sculpture and architecture twelfth-century Europe has produced.

Nor were Cistercians slow to tailor Burgundian architecture to suit their needs, and though her great early monasteries have now perished at least Fontenay survives, ranking among the most breathtaking monastic sites of mediaeval France. Gothic also arrived early, and there began a second wave of experimentation, tentative at first but blossoming in the centre (where the new choir at Vézelay is the first intimation we have that Gothic architecture had a future outside northern France) into perhaps the most lucid of all architectural styles.

It is thus no surprise that the thirteenth century saw the region at the cutting edge of Europe. At Auxerre a definitive account of space as illusion took shape, and at Semur-en-Auxois a theatre of stone clambered aboard the church. Moreover, the patrons invested heavily in glass. No thirteenth-century church was without it - and most have retained it, blazing the interior with a heady combination of light, meaning and colour. This sublime vigour even continued into the later middle ages, where under the Valois dukes of Burgundy Dijon became a major artistic centre, attracting artists of the calibre of Rogier van der Weyden and Claus Sluter.

Itinerary

Day 1. Take the Eurostar at c. 9.30am from London St Pancras to Paris and then onwards by TGV (high-speed train) to Mâcon. Continue by coach to Tournus where two nights are spent.

Day 2: Cluny, Berzé-la-Ville, Tournus. Cluny is the site of the largest church and most powerful monastery in mediaeval France. Study the magnificent remains of the church and monastic buildings. The tiny chapel at Berzé-la-Ville was perhaps built as the abbot of Cluny's private retreat, and is embellished with superb wall paintings of c. 1100. At Tournus see the striking and immensely influential early 11th-century monastery.

Day 3: Beaune, Autun, Dijon. The 15th-century Hôtel-Dieu in Beaune houses Rogier van der Weyden's *Last Judgement*. The stalwart Romanesque church of Notre-Dame has fine tapestries. At Autun the cathedral of St Lazare is celebrated for its sublime sequence of Romanesque capitals and relief sculptures by Gislebertus. First of three nights in Dijon.

Day 4: St Thibault, Semur-en Auxois, Fontenay. The church of the market town of St Thibault has a 13th-cent. choir that is the most graceful Burgundian construction of the period. The fortified hill town of Semur-en Auxois has a splendid Gothic collegiate church. The tranquil abbey of Fontenay is the earliest Cistercian church to survive and has an exceptionally well-preserved monastic precinct. Favigny-sur-Ozerain is a lovely little town.

Day 5: Dijon. A day dedicated to Burgundy's capital and one of the most attractive of French cities with many fine buildings from 11th to 18th centuries. St Bénigne has an ambitious early Romanesque crypt. Notre-Dame is a quite stunning early Gothic parish church. The palace of the Valois dukes now houses a museum with extensive collections of work from the period of their rule (1364–1477).

Day 6: Saulieu, Avallon, Vézelay. Visit the Basilique St-Andoche in Saulieu, with carved capitals depicting flora, fauna and biblical stories. Drive north to Avallon, whose fine Romanesque church is spectacularly situated above the river Cousin. Vézelay, a picturesque hill town whose summit is occupied by the abbey of La Madeleine, was one of the great pilgrimage centres of the Middle Ages, and has one of the most impressive of all 12th-century churches for both its architecture and its sculpture. First of two nights in Auxerre.

Day 7: Auxerre. The morning includes the magnificent Carolingian crypt of St Germain and the cathedral, a pioneering 13th-century building with exceptional glass and sculpture. The afternoon is free.

Day 8: Sens. The striking cathedral of Sens is among the earliest Gothic churches of Europe, housing important glass and an exquisitely carved 12th- and 13th-century west front. The diocesan museum also houses an extensive collection of Roman and mediaeval antiquities. Take the Eurostar from Paris arriving London St Pancras c. 6.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,260 (deposit £250). This includes: Eurostar (first class, standard premier) London to Paris, and TGV (high-speed train) Paris to Mâcon (times confirmed 2 months before departure); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 6 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all state taxes; the services of the lecturer; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £310** (double room for sole use). **Price without Eurostar and TGV £2,050.**

Hotels: in Tournus (2 nights): 4-star hotel formerly a 15th-century guard house, located on the ramparts of the town. In Dijon (3 nights): close to the cathedral, a comfortable 4-star hotel furnished to a high standard. In Auxerre (2 nights): a 3-star hotel in a delightful 18th-century *hôtel particulier*.

How strenuous? Quite a lot of walking, some of it on steep hillsides, and standing around. Plenty of coach travel and three hotels. You will need to be able to lift your luggage on and off the train and wheel it within stations. Average distance by coach per day: 70 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Toulouse & Albi

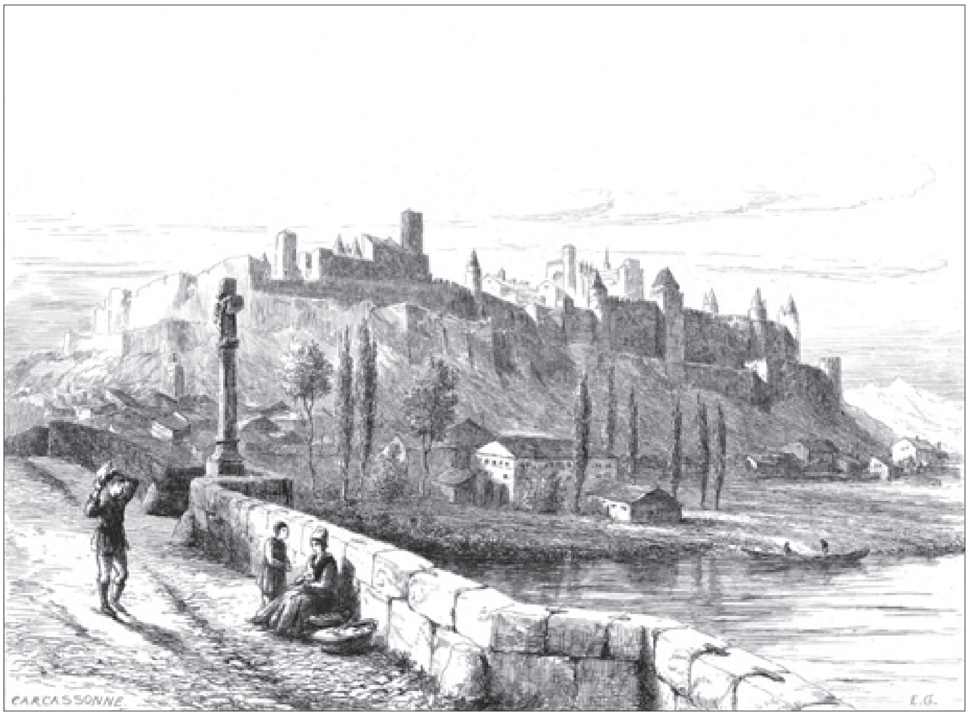
The Haut-Languedoc & the Rouergue

9–15 October 2012 (mz 395)
7 days • £2,520
Lecturer: Dr Alexandra Gajewski

One of the most beautiful regions in France.

Predominantly Mediaeval but with many fine examples of Romanesque and Late Gothic.

Based throughout in Toulouse, in a 4-star hotel converted from a 17th-century convent.



Carcassonne, etching 1875 after Ernest George.

Between the Massif Central to the north and the peaks of the Pyrenees to the south, the region of Midi-Pyrénées, as it has been called since 1972, intersected by the valleys of the Lot, Garonne and Tarn, is one of the most beautiful in France. Encompassing Haut-Languedoc, Rouergue and Quercy, the ancient city of Toulouse is the capital.

Two aspects of popular religion were of decisive influence here in shaping the art and architecture of the Middle Ages: the cult of relics and the consequent passion for pilgrimage; and the Albigensian heresy and its subsequent suppression.

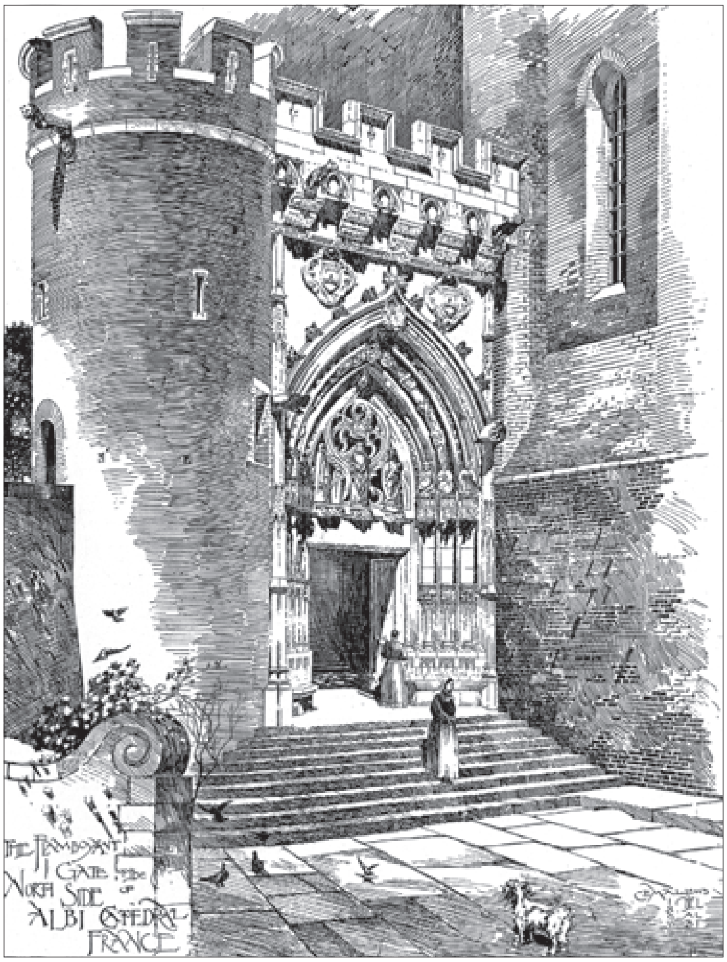
Pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela in Spain trailed across the region and provided both the need and the funds for the construction of the great Romanesque churches at Toulouse, Conques, Moissac and Cahors. Rich sculptural and painted decoration, and reliquaries and cult objects in bejewelled gold, silver and enamel formed an integral part of these buildings.

Conques uniquely preserves a large part of its mediaeval treasury including the famous image of its patron saint, Ste Foy. Catering both for the physical and spiritual needs of pilgrims was a lucrative business, and shrines such as those at Conques were intended to attract the pilgrims on their way to Compostela.

In later years, the universal faith of the Romanesque era seemed a golden age for Christianity. But then came a revival of an old heresy which was not only in opposition to the orthodox teachings of the Church but even challenged its very existence. The heresy of the Cathars, or Albigenses, had an intense and numerous following in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly around Albi.

The murder of the papal legate in 1208 provoked the Albigensian Crusade. These years of turmoil and religious conflict, exploited by the kings of France and knights from the north to gain power over Languedoc, led to the fortification of small towns, the bastides. Carcassonne was fortified on a grand scale, and in spite of some nineteenth century rebuilding, remains the most impressive example of mediaeval circumvallation in Europe.

The eventual victory of the north and of orthodoxy is reflected in the great cathedrals of Rodez, Albi and Toulouse, which were



Albi Cathedral, engraving after a drawing by C.E. Mallows 1895.

modelled on the Rayonnant and Flamboyant styles of the royal domain. That the cathedral at Albi is also fortified allows alternative local interpretations of Gothic architecture as a symbol either of the triumph of the Church militant, or of oppression by faraway authorities.

There are also outstanding examples of late Gothic sculpture and painting in the region. To leaven the predominantly mediaeval theme of the tour, there are the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum in Albi and the Goya Museum at Castres.

Itinerary

Day 1: Toulouse. Fly at 2.30pm from London Heathrow to Toulouse, once the capital of all regions of the langues d'Oc. All six nights are spent in Toulouse.

Day 2: Toulouse. The Jacobin, a Dominican church, resembles a monastic refectory on a vast scale. The buildings of the Augustinians survive as a museum with a splendid collection of Romanesque sculpture. The eastern arm of the cathedral, perhaps by Jean des Champs, is joined to a nave of local workmanship on a much smaller scale, to bizarre effect. There is time to explore the historic centre and perhaps wander along the banks of the Garonne.

Day 3: Moissac, Cahors. The abbey at Moissac was extremely influential in 11th and 12th cents. and has an extensive programme of Romanesque sculpture including the awe-inspiring The Last Judgement portal. Enclosed in a meander of the river Lot, Cahors was a flourishing commercial and university town in the Middle Ages. The Valentré bridge is a remarkable example of mediaeval military architecture while the cathedral has a fine Romanesque tympanum and Renaissance cloisters.

Day 4: Conques, Rodez. Conques is very much off the beaten track but was once one of the great churches on the pilgrimage route to Compostela. The tympanum depicting The Last Judgement is one of the most beautiful and sophisticated works of Romanesque art while the treasury contains many fine works of Mediaeval art including some from the Carolingian era and the shrine of Ste Foy. Rodez cathedral, a manifestation of north European dominance and orthodoxy, built after the Albigensian Crusade, is attributed to Jean des Champs.

Day 5: Albi. Spend the whole day in Albi, a small town of considerable charm set on the banks of the river Tarn. The cathedral is a potent symbol of the crushing of the Cathars, the building being as much a fortress as a church. There is a remarkable carved stone rood screen in late Flamboyant Gothic style. Visit the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum, housed in the episcopal palace, the greatest collection of this local artist's work. Some free time to explore the historic centre, predominantly mediaeval and renaissance, with a number of well-preserved brick, timber and stone mansions.

Day 6: Castres, Carcassonne. Drive through the Montagne Noire, the southernmost tip of the Massif Central. Stop at the pleasant small town of Castres, which has a museum dedicated to the works of Goya. The spectacular walled town of Carcassonne in the valley of the Aude, with crenellated walled circuit, was famously restored by Violet-le-Duc. Visit the exquisite church of St Nazaire, with fine stained glass and statues.

Day 7: Toulouse. The basilica of St Sernin is the most famous and most magnificent of the great pilgrimage churches in southern France on the route to Compostela, and a major monument of Romanesque architecture. Some free time. Fly from Toulouse, returning to London Heathrow at 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,520 (deposit £250) this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 320 & 319); private coach; accommodation as specified below; breakfasts and 4 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £340** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,370.**

Hotel: an elegant 4-star in a 17th-century convent set back from the Place du Capitole in the heart of Toulouse. Dinners are at good restaurants and the hotel's own brasserie.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, and the tour would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking. Some days involve a lot of driving. Average distance by coach per day: 89 miles.

Music: details of opera performances will be circulated nearer the time. We will endeavour to obtain tickets as requested.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

CAVE ART OF FRANCE

PREHISTORY IN THE DORDOGNE

24 September–1 October 2012 (MZ 382)
8 days • £2,650
Lecturer: Dr Paul Bahn

A new tour for 2012.

This tour encompasses some of the most important Prehistoric caves in Europe including Lascaux II, Peche Merle and Niaux.

Great art, whatever its function or the 'artist's' intention, in an area of outstanding natural beauty with charming villages.

Led by a leading specialist in Prehistoric art.

Visiting the Ice Age decorated caves of Europe may be a pilgrimage, in homage to the region's artists of 30,000–10,000 years ago, or it may simply be curiosity. But while one's interest may have been triggered by books, television or lectures, there is simply no substitute for seeing the sites themselves, some of humankind's greatest artistic achievements in their unusual, evocative and original settings.

In addition, the caves of the Perigord and Quercy are in regions of outstanding beauty, famed for their wine and cuisine. Four nights are spent in the capital of Prehistory, Les Eyzies, a village filled and surrounded by famous Ice Age dwellings, its spectacular limestone cliffs giving it one of the most beautiful and striking landscapes in the world.

Whatever your motivation or interest, a visit to an Ice Age cave is a tremendous privilege. After more than a century of research, we still only know about 300 such sites in Eurasia, and only a small fraction of these are open to the public, because of difficulties of access or conservation concerns. As such, they constitute a very limited and finite resource, and yet visitors can approach these original masterpieces extremely closely, an experience unparalleled in major art galleries.

Unlike a visit to the Louvre or the Prado, in entering a cave you are seeing the images precisely where they were created, you are standing or crouching just where the artists did. In many cases the journey to the cave entrance and the route through the chambers give your experience a sense of immediacy, purity and vividness. Entering a world far removed from one of commerce, of art-dealers and of critics enhances a feeling of connection with the artists. There is nothing like a stalactite dripping on your head to remind you that you are in a pristine and natural setting.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 4.45pm from London Gatwick to Bordeaux, in time for a light dinner in the hotel. Overnight in Bordeaux.

Pyrenean landscape, wood engraving c. 1890.

Day 2: Bordeaux, Pair-non-Pair. The Musée d'Aquitaine provides a perfect introduction to the archaeology and art of the Ice Age in southwest France; a particular highlight is the 'Venus of Laussel' bas-relief carving. The cave of Pair-non-Pair is small but filled with wonderfully deep engravings of animals – and with no electrical installations provides a more authentic experience. Continue into the Dordogne to Les Eyzies for four nights.

Day 3: Les Eyzies. The National Prehistory Museum, now housed in an ultra-modern building at the foot of the cliffs, has one of the world's greatest collections of Ice Age material. In addition to the wealth of stone and bone tools, there is fantastic jewellery and portable art objects, as well as the finds from the cave of Lascaux. Font-de-Gaume is one of the greatest of all Ice Age decorated caves, with remarkable polychrome bison and other animals, skilfully placed to take full advantage of the rock shapes. Cap Blanc is the greatest sculpted frieze from the Ice Age that is open to the public.

Day 4: Lascaux II. The extremely accurate facsimile of Lascaux II is now the public's only chance to see the wonders of the most famous and most beautiful of all decorated caves. The park at Le Thot contains many of the animal species which were familiar to Ice Age people: aurochs, bison, horses, deer and ibex, as well as a robotic mammoth. Rouffignac is a unique experience; a decorated tunnel-like cave so vast that one travels around it in a train. Its art is hugely dominated by drawings of mammoths.

The Abri Pataud is the best possible way to see what a major Ice Age excavation site looks like, while the small museum next door still has a carving on its ceiling. Overnight Les Eyzies.

Day 5: Beynac, Cougnac. Perched high above the river and with breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape Beynac Castle is an impressive mediaeval fortress; see the bedroom of Richard the Lionheart. The Grotte de Cougnac is one of the most beautiful of all decorated caves, not only for its art, but also and especially for its natural formations of stalagmites and stalactites.

Day 6: Pech Merle, Cahors, Toulouse. Pech Merle is among the greatest of the decorated caves. It is huge and has spectacular natural formations and a wide variety of artistic techniques, including the famous spotted horse panel. Some free time is spent in Cahors on route to Toulouse, where two nights are spent.

Day 7: Niaux, Toulouse. The tour ends with Niaux, a fitting climax as the long walk into this Pyrenean mountain leads one to the 'Salon Noir' with its stunning drawings of bison, horses and ibex, and its extraordinary acoustics. The afternoon is free in Toulouse; suggestions include the Musée Saint-Raymond and the cathedral.

Day 8. Catch the late morning flight to London Heathrow, arriving c. 12.45pm. *This tour departs from Gatwick and returns to Heathrow.*

Practicalities

Price: £2,650 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled flights with British Airways (Airbus 319); travel by comfortable private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and five dinners (including one light dinner) with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £440**, **price without flights £2,440.**

Hotels. In Bordeaux (1 night) a central 3-star hotel. Rooms are comfortable but vary in size. In Les Eyzies (4 nights) a charming 3-star hotel; rooms are neutrally decorated and there is a good restaurant. In Toulouse (2 nights) a central 4-star hotel in a converted 17th-century convent, set back from the Place du Capitole; good Brasserie.

How strenuous? A fair amount of walking on uneven and sometimes steep and slippery ground. It can get very humid inside the caves. Average distance by coach per day: 70 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

ROMAN & MEDIAEVAL PROVENCE

17–23 June 2012 (MY 273)
7 days • £2,060
Lecturer: Dr Alexandra Gajewski

The South of France in the Middle Ages.

Considers the Roman and Early Christian influence on mediaeval sculptors and builders.

A natural setting of exceptional attractiveness.

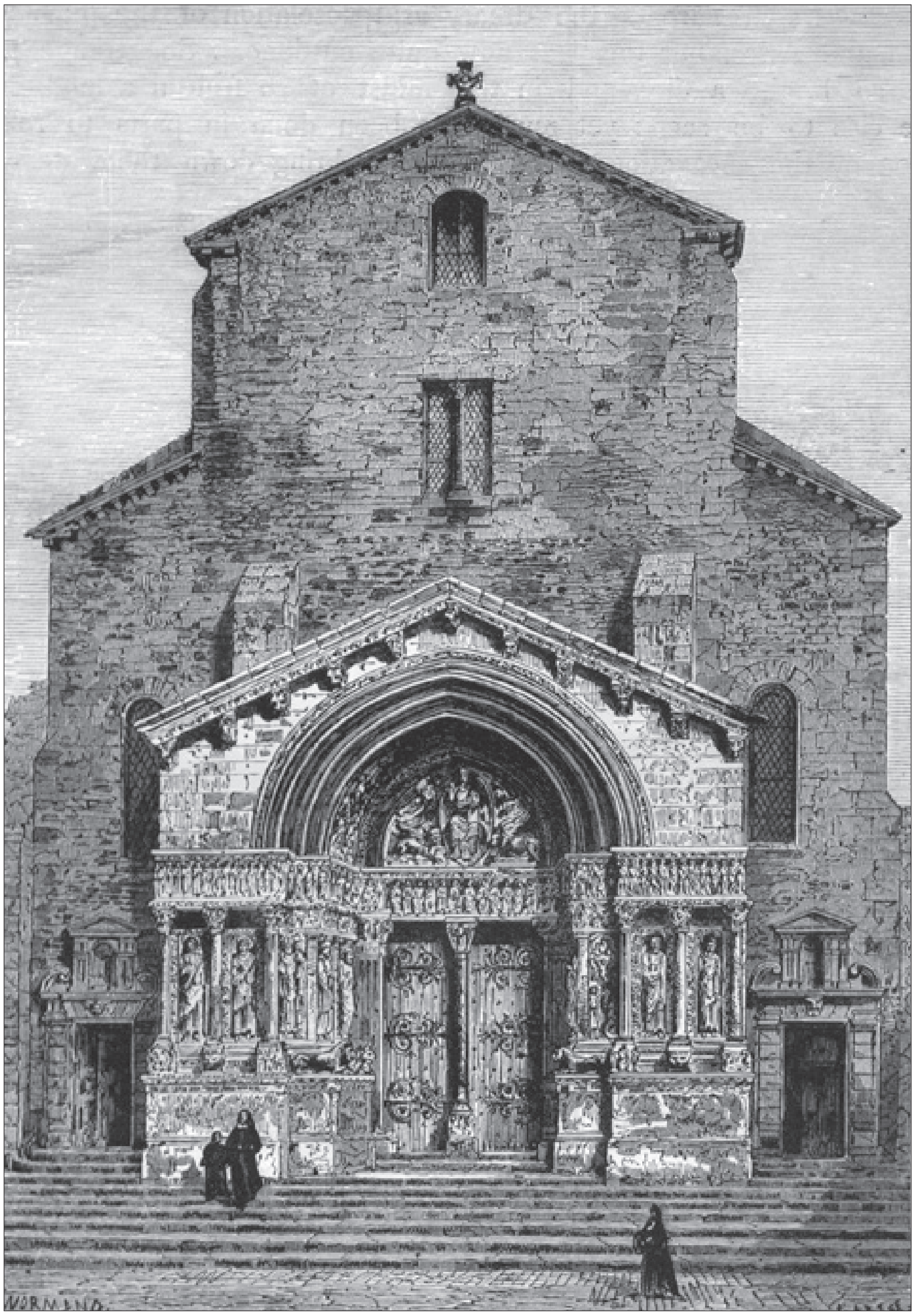
Based throughout in a 4-star hotel in Avignon.

Led by an architectural historian.

Famed for its natural beauty, its wealth of Augustan and second-century monuments, and the quality and ambition of its mediaeval work, Provence can seem the very essence of Mediterranean France. But its settlement was – historically – surprisingly concentrated, and the major Roman and mediaeval centres are clustered within the valleys of the Durance and Rhône.

This is the area which was marked out for development in the first and second centuries AD, and the range and quantity of Roman work

Below: Arles, St Trophime, wood engraving c. 1890; right: detail from Aix Cathedral, engraving c. 1900 after a drawing by H.P. Clifford.



which survives at Orange, St-Rémy and Arles is impressive. Indeed, as one moves into the Late Antique period it is precisely this triangle which blossoms – and in Arles one is witness to the most significant Early Christian city of Mediterranean Gaul.

This Roman infrastructure is fundamental, and the pre-eminent Romanesque churches of Provence may come as something of a surprise, being notable both for a predilection for sheer wall surfaces and an indebtedness to earlier architectural norms.

But it is above all the sculpture which is most susceptible to this sort of historicising impulse. The Romanesque sculpture of Provence is more skilfully and self-consciously antique than any outside central Italy, and is often organised in a manner designed to evoke either fourth-century sarcophagi, or Roman theatres and triumphal arches. The façade of St-Trophime at Arles is a well-known examples of this, but it is a theme we also encounter in many of the smaller churches – places such as Pernes-les-Fontaines and Montmajour – where exquisite friezes of acanthus and vinescroll are used to both elaborate and articulate exteriors of stunning delicacy.

For once the truly great late mediaeval buildings we see are secular – René d'Anjou's superb donjon and château at Tarascon and, supremely, the mighty papal palace at Avignon.

Itinerary

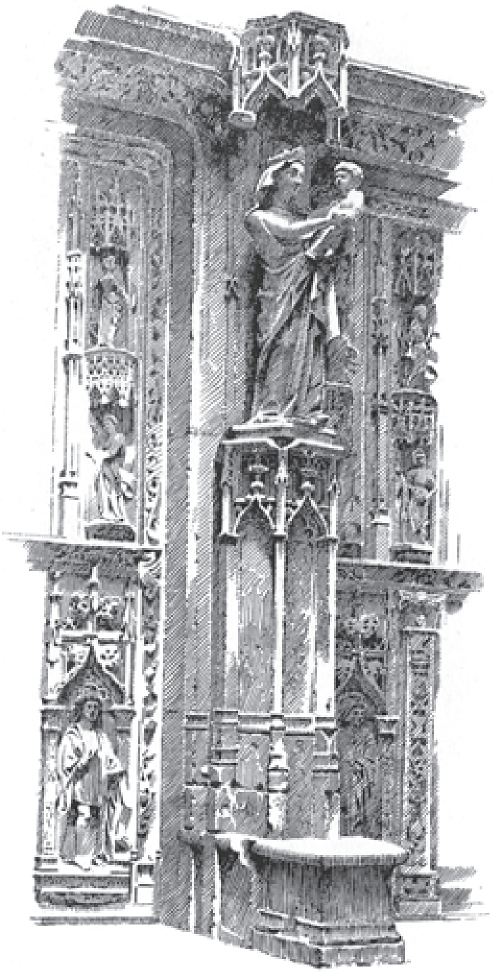
Day 1. Fly at c. 2.00pm from London Gatwick to Marseille. Drive to Avignon, where all six nights are spent.

Day 2: Avignon. The Palais des Papes is the principal monument of the Avignon papacy, one-time site of the papal curia and by far the most significant 14th-century building to survive in southern France. The collections of late Gothic sculpture and painting in the Petit-Palais act as a splendid foil to the work at the papal palace, while the cathedral houses the magnificent tomb of Pope John XXII.

Day 3: Pernes-les-Fontaines, Vaison, Venasque. Gentle stroll through Pernes, a delightful fortified river town with an important Romanesque church and 13th-century frescoed tower. At Vaison-la-Romaine the sublime late Romanesque cathedral is attached to a northern cloister. Drive in the late afternoon over the Dentelles de Montmirail to the stunning early mediaeval baptistery at Venasque.

Day 4: Villeneuve, Orange, Tarascon, Pont-du-Gard. A day spent mostly within sight of the Rhône, beginning with Pope Innocent VI's now ruined Charterhouse at Villeneuve-lez-Avignon. The day's real star is Orange, site of the greatest of all Roman theatres to survive in the West. In the afternoon visit René d'Anjou's mighty riverside château at Tarascon and that astonishing feat of engineering that brought water over the River Gardon at the Pont-du-Gard.

Day 5: St-Rémy-de-Provence. Drive along the northern flank of the Alpilles to St-Rémy-de-Provence, Glanum of old, and proud possessor of one of the truly great funerary memorials of the Roman world, the cenotaph erected in honour of the grandsons of Augustus, Gaius and Lucius. Some free time.



Day 6: Montmajour, Arles. Explore the superlative complex of churches, cemeteries and conventual buildings that once constituted the abbey of Montmajour. In Arles the amphitheatre is a justly famous early 2nd-century structure of a type developed from the Colosseum. The great Romanesque Cathedral of St-Trophime is home to one of the greatest cloisters of 12th-century Europe. The Musée de l'Arles Antique houses a quite spellbinding collection of classical and early Christian art.

Day 7: Silvacane, Aix-en-Provence. At Silvacane, a major late 12th-century Cistercian abbey, the monastic buildings descend a series of terraces down to the River Durance. Finally visit Aix, where the cathedral provides an enthralling end to the tour, with its extraordinary juxtaposition of Merovingian baptistery, Romanesque cloister, 13th-century chancel and late mediaeval west front. Fly from Marseille, arriving London Gatwick c. 6.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,060 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 737); travel by private coach throughout; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, sites, etc., visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £370**. **Price without flights £1,930.**

Hotel: in Avignon (6 nights): a 4-star hotel in a converted 16th-century convent. Some rooms are in a modern extension. Excellent location near the Palais des Papes.

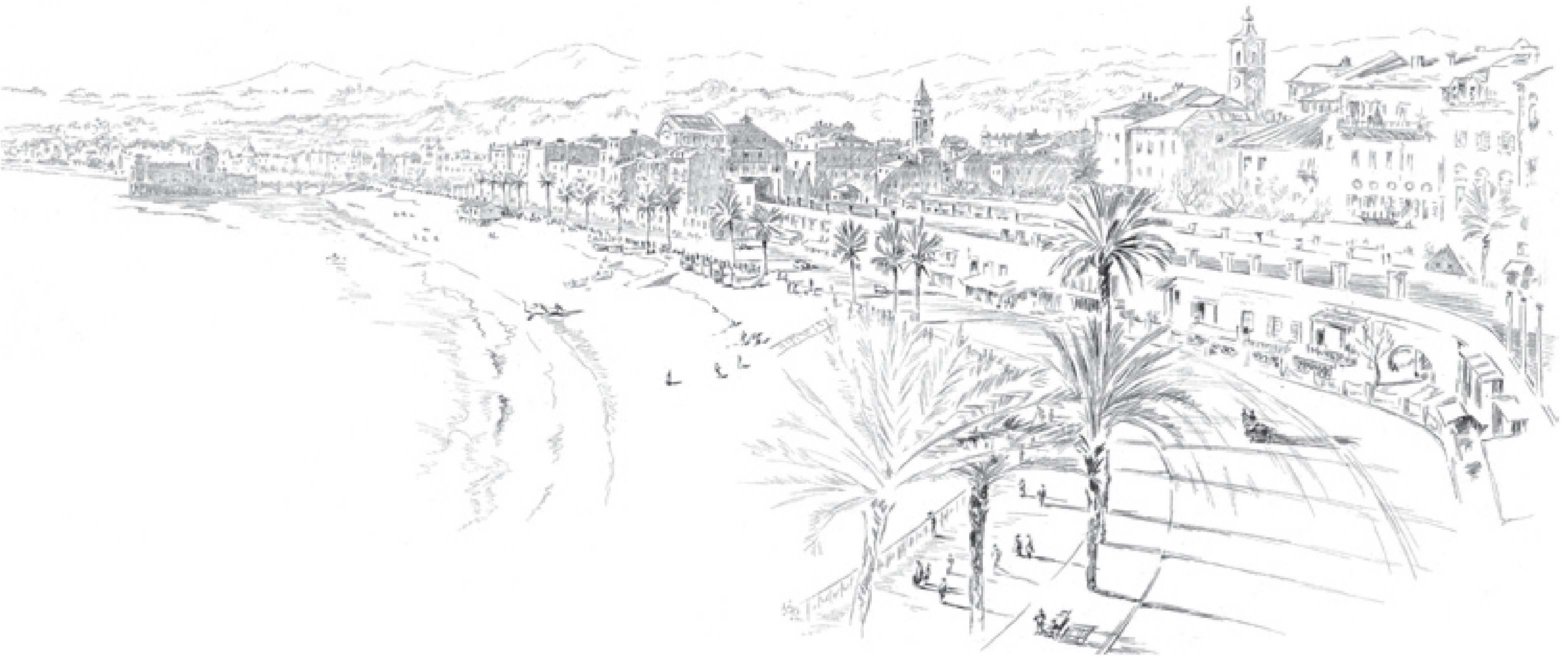
How strenuous? Quite a lot of walking is involved, particularly in the town centres. The tour is not suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. There are some long days and coach journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 53 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

OPERA AT AIX & ORANGE

July 2012
Details will be available in the autumn. Register your interest now.

MODERN ART ON THE CÔTE D'AZUR



Nice, etching c. 1925 by Frederick Farrell.

11–18 October 2011 (MY 980)
This tour is currently full.

17–24 April 2012 (MY 217)
8 days • £2,310
Lecturer: Vivien Hamilton

16–23 October 2012 (MZ 401)
8 days • £2,310
Lecturer: Monica Bohm Duchen

Europe's greatest concentration of classic modern art, in a setting of idyllic scenery and pretty towns.

Renoir, Bonnard, Braque, Léger, Miró, Giacometti, Cocteau, Chagall, Matisse, Picasso.

Stay in Nice throughout, in a comfortable 4-star a short walk from the Promenade des Anglais.

Natural resources and climate have drawn invaders and visitors to Nice and its surroundings from the Greek colonists of classical times to the jet-set of today. But from the late nineteenth century a special category of visitor – and settler – has transformed the Côte d'Azur into the greatest concentration of modern art in Europe.

Monet first visited Antibes in 1883; Signac bought a house in the fishing village of St-Tropez in 1892; Renoir moved to Cagnes-sur-Mer in 1895 and remained there for the rest of his life. Matisse's first visit to the Midi in 1904 transformed his art, and from 1918 he spent more time on the Côte d'Azur than in Paris.

Matisse, Chagall and Picasso are merely among the most illustrious of the artists who chose to live in the South of France. Many of their fellow modernisers followed suit: Braque, Bonnard, Dufy, Picabia.

This tour is an extraordinary opportunity to see how modernity relates to the past as well as the present, and how gallery displays can be centred on the art, the location or the patron/ collector. In Matisse's Chapelle du Rosaire at Vence, traditional arts and crafts have been revived by a modern genius, as in the monumental mosaic and glass designs of Léger which can be seen at Biot.

There are also echoes of collecting habits of earlier eras in the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild. The mixture of past and present and the juxtaposition of the Goût Rothschild with the beauty of its location are breathtaking. (Graham Sutherland drew exotic flowers and plants in the extraordinary gardens.)

At Antibes the Picasso Museum (re-opened in 2008) is housed in the Château Grimaldi, lent to Picasso as studio space in 1946 where he produced life-affirming paintings.

Old and new galleries abound, such as the Fondation Maeght, St-Paul-de-Vence, whose building (designed by José Luis Sert, 1963) makes it a work of outstanding sympathy to its natural surroundings, in gardens enlivened by Miró's *Labyrinthe* and other sculptures.

Itinerary

Day 1: Nice. Fly at c. 11.30am from London Heathrow to Nice. There is an afternoon visit to the Musée Jules Cheret, concentrating on their 19th- and early 20th-century holdings (Monet, Renoir, Dufy, etc.). All seven nights are spent in Nice.

Day 2: St-Paul-de-Vence, Vence. The Maeght Foundation at St-Paul-de-Vence is renowned for its collections (Picasso, Hepworth, Miró, Arp, Giacometti, but not all works are shown at once) and for its architecture and setting. Vence, an artists' colony, has the Chapel of the Rosary, designed and decorated by Matisse.

Day 3: Cap Ferrat, Villefranche, Menton. Drive east to St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat to see the paintings, sculpture and furniture of the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, a mansion set in attractive gardens. In Villefranche is the small Chapelle St-Pierre, decorated by Cocteau. Along the coast to Menton, the last French town before Italy, is the Musée Cocteau and the Salle des Mariages, also painted by Cocteau.

Day 4: Nice. The Marc Chagall Museum has the largest collection of the artist's works, notably the seventeen canvases of the

Biblical Message, set in a peaceful garden in a salubrious Nice suburb. The afternoon is free in Nice; suggestions include the Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain with its excellent collection of post-war art.

Day 5: St-Tropez, Biot. Drive west to St-Tropez, which has been popular with artists since Paul Signac settled here in 1892. The Musée de l'Annonciade is one of France's finest collections of modern art (Signac, Maillol, Matisse, Bonnard, Vlaminck, Braque). Continue to Biot and visit the renovated Musée National Fernand Léger, built to house the artist's works bequeathed to his wife.

Day 6: Antibes, Vallauris. Most of the paintings Picasso produced in his studio in the Château Grimaldi in 1946 have been donated to the town of Antibes. Vallauris is a centre of contemporary pottery revived by Picasso, whose masterpiece *War and Peace* is here.

Day 7: Nice, Cagnes-sur-Mer. The Musée Matisse unites a wide range of the artist's work; sculpture, ceramics, stained glass as well as painting. Renoir's house at Cagnes-sur-Mer is set amidst olive groves, a memorial to the only major Impressionist to settle in the south.

Day 8: Le Cannet. The first museum dedicated to the works of Bonnard is due to open in Le Cannet in June 2011. Fly from Nice arriving at London Heathrow c. 4.30pm.

In recent years, renovation work has led to museum closures. At the moment (with the exception of the Bonnard museum) all visits listed are possible but we cannot rule out the possibility of changes.

Practicalities

Price: £2,310 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled flights with British Airways (Airbus 319); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £280. Price without flights £2,170.**

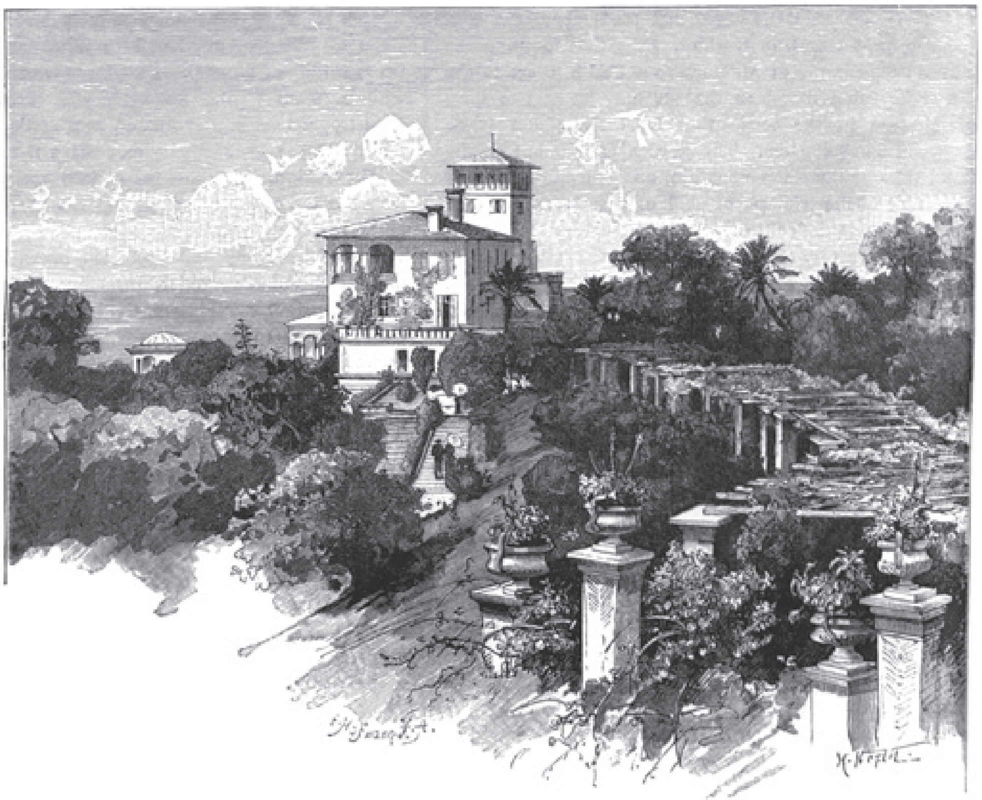
Hotel: in Nice, a charming 4-star, a short walk from the Promenade des Anglais. Rooms are comfortable and well-maintained but vary in size. Public areas are limited. Staff are friendly. Dinners are at good restaurants.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking and standing around in museums. Average distance by coach per day: 51 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

GARDENS OF THE RIVIERA

IN & AROUND MENTON & NICE



The gardens at La Mortola, wood engraving from 'The Art Journal' 1884.

28 March–3 April 2012 (MY 200)
7 days • £1,980
Lecturer: Caroline Holmes

11–17 April 2012 (MY 208)
7 days • £1,980
Lecturer: Steven Desmond

Inspiring historic gardens in spectacular settings, with exceptional growing conditions.

Includes visits to some gardens not normally open to the public.

Based in Menton throughout.

When Tobias Smollett arrived on the Riviera in 1763, he found himself 'inchanted' by a landscape 'all cultivated like a garden'. A century later Dr Bennett's discovery of the miraculous winter climate at Menton established the town as a haven for prosperous foreigners in need of climatic therapy. By 1900 this narrow strip of land between the Maritime Alps and the Mediterranean had been transformed into a paradise of villas, palatial hotels, seafront promenades and exotic vegetation.

The migratory nature of the moneyed population meant that the region developed a character quite separate from local cultural traditions. In a landscape of olive and lemon groves, the villa gardens seem an eclectic collection, disconcerting for those who look for patterns of continuity, but best viewed as separate incidents taking advantage of the exceptional growing conditions.

The Hanbury family famously made the steep Italian cliffs of La Mortola a garden of beauty and experiment. Lawrence Johnston, the maker of Hidcote, established himself in the hills above Menton where his romantically sited garden at La Serre de la Madone provided a home for his huge collection of exotics. The gardens of the villas in Garavan continue to evince the private pleasures of past and present owners of many nationalities and design persuasions.

The French have added their own distinctive contribution to this artificial enclave. Renoir found new inspiration, as well as some relief from pain, in his garden at Cagnes-sur-Mer. Marguerite and Aimé Maeght established a magnificent modern art collection in a garden setting at St-Paul de Vence. Art of a different character adorns the rooms of the Villa Ephrussi Rothschild at St Jean-Cap-Ferrat where the gardens take advantage of an incomparable setting, viewing the Mediterranean through a filter of pines, palms and cypresses. Charles, Vicomte de Noailles, made a garden drawing together a rich variety of cultural influences at the Villa Noailles, looking out over the wooded hills near Grasse.

Itinerary

Day 1: Cagnes-sur-Mer, Menton. Fly at c. 11.30am from Heathrow to Nice with British Airways. Renoir spent his last years in the farmhouse at Les Collettes near Cagnes-sur-Mer, painting and sculpting from the olive terraces around the little garden. Transfer by coach to Menton where all six nights are spent.

Day 2: Menton. Lawrence Johnston's great garden Serre de la Madone was made between the wars, and though much of the detail has gone, a romantic atmosphere still pervades the dramatic layout. The garden at Clos du Peyronnet is still owned by an Englishman who continues to develop it, blending plants from around the world in a setting of terraces, pools and pergolas.

Day 3: St Jean-Cap-Ferrat. Still a secluded haven for the fortunate, the gardens at the Villa Ephrussi Rothschild, established by Beatrice de Rothschild, are rich and varied, and take full advantage of the exceptional position. The house contains a varied art collection. Les Cèdres is a great forest of exotic planting around a luxurious house built for Leopold III of Belgium and landscaped by Harold Peto. Four generations of the present owner's family have brought the garden to its state of magnificent maturity.

Day 4: Monaco and La Mortola (Italy). The astonishing outdoor collection of cacti and succulents at the Jardin Exotique in Monaco overlooks the Principality and the sea from its clifftop walks. The Hanbury Botanic Gardens at La Mortola have been famous since their establishment in the 19th century. An unparalleled collection of specimens festoon the steep site. Curtains of plumbago and bougainvillea, perfumed parterres, pergolas, exotic pavilions and citrus orchards adorn this garden paradise on a private headland.

Day 5: Menton. Perched on the hillside villa quarter of Garavan, Val Rahmeh is an early 20th-century villa surrounded by gardens of exceptional richness created by Maybud Campbell in the 1950s. Optional visit to Fontana Rosa whose tiled benches still evoke the 'Writers' Garden' created in 1921 by Vicente Blasco Ibañez, successful playwright and novelist of *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* fame. Literary threads are drawn in from across the world, the surviving rotunda decorated with 100 tiles illustrating Cervantes' *Don Quixote* encapsulates the mood perfectly. Alternatively spend some independent time in Menton; a chance to see the Musée Cocteau or his Salle des Mariages.

Day 6: Grasse, Fondation Maeght. Lunch and free time in Grasse. The Fondation Maeght near St Paul provides a rare opportunity to view modernism in a garden context. There is a remarkable collection of paintings and sculpture.

Day 7: Menton, Nice. Visit a private garden in Menton, not normally open to the public (details will be provided). Transfer to Nice for some free time in the old town, or at the Matisse or Chagall museums. Return to London Heathrow at c. 7.30pm.

Some of these gardens can only be visited by special arrangement and the order of visits may vary. A couple are subject to confirmation.

Menton, engraving from 'Picturesque Europe' c. 1880.

Practicalities

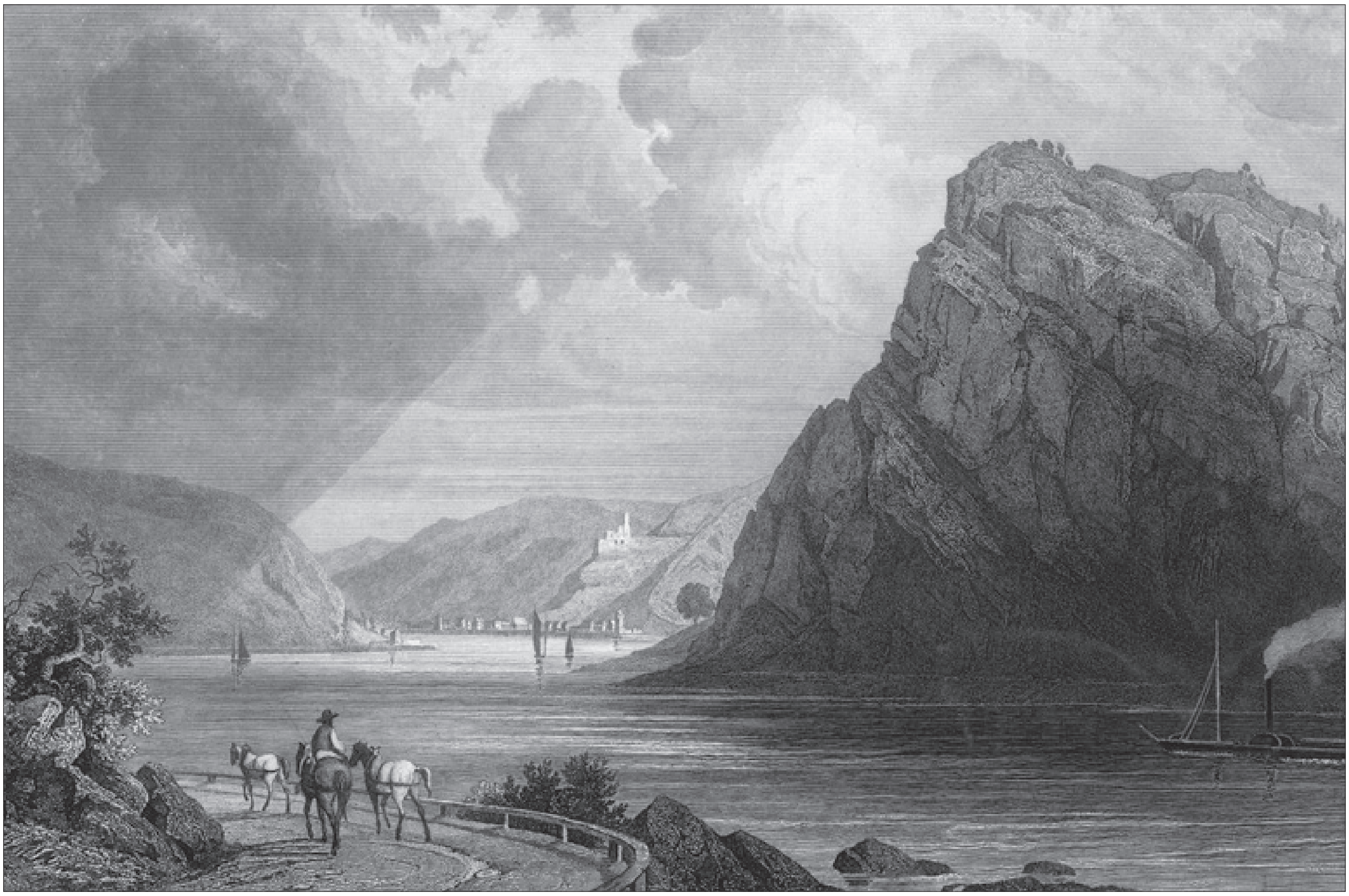
Price: £1,980 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus A319); private coach travel; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one light lunch and five dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to gardens, museums, etc.; tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all state taxes; the services of the lecturer; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Upgrade to sea view £80 per room** (shared room). **Single supplement £190** (double room for sole use), **with sea view £260. Price without flights £1,830.**

Hotel: modern and comfortable 3-star hotel with some 4-star features. Located near the border with Italy looking back on Vieux Menton. Suite available on request.

How strenuous? A lot of walking and standing.Several gardens are on steep sites and paths are often uneven. Sure-footedness is essential. Average distance by coach per day: 42 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 to 22 participants.

THE RHINE VALLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL



The Loreley, mid-19th-century steel engraving.

31 May–7 June 2012 (MY 266)
Details available October 2011.
Contact us to register your interest.

Seven concerts in seven historic venues along the Rhine in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland.

Cantus Cölln, Freiburg Barockorchester, the Mandelring Quartet and more.

Talks on the music by Roderick Swanston and on the history of the region by Richard Evans.

Travel aboard the Amadeus Princess.

The Rhine Valley Music Festival returns in with an impressive line-up of artists.

The quality of music making will be further enhanced by the venues. Many are small, some are of the same period as the music performed within, others are rarely used as concert spaces, all of which lead to an informality and intimacy of musical communication between players and audience which engenders an intense artistic experience.

The concerts are effectively private, being exclusive to participants (maximum 130) who book a package which not only provides admission to all seven performances but also accommodation, all meals, flights or trains from the UK (though this is optional), travel by road and river, talks and a range of other services.

Accommodation is on a first-class river cruiser chartered exclusively for the festival. As this is both hotel and principal means of transport, participants will be able to travel from Amsterdam to Basel and attend all the concerts without having to change hotel or drive long distances.

The spoken word plays an important role in the festival. There will be talks on the music by Roderick Swanston and on the history of the region by Richard Evans, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.

The Rhine is one of the shortest of the great rivers of the world, but probably no other has served such a prominent role in shaping the history and culture of a continent. As a trading route, the Rhine brought prosperity to the region and a degree of cultural unity to different peoples and nations dispersed along its length. But for those who wished to travel across its south-north axis the river presented a major obstacle, and so was the scene of tension throughout history.

Stretches of the river are also exceedingly beautiful, the Middle Rhine especially being flanked by vine-clad hills, virtually every peak being topped by a castle. There will be time to explore some of the lovely towns and villages along its course and to see much art and architecture of the highest quality.

Full details of the festival are due to be published in October 2011. If you would like to receive these as soon as they are complete (and before they are distributed to our mailing list), please register interest with us now.

Music in Berlin

Art, architecture & music in the German capital

20–27 December 2011 (my 137)
8 days • £3,120
(including 4 opera tickets)
Lecturer: Tom Abbott

14–19 February 2012 (my 163)
6 days • £2,380
(including tickets to 5 performances)
Lecturers: Professor Jan Smaczny
& Tom Abbott

Berlin possesses some of the finest art galleries and museums in the world and offers the highest standards of music and opera performance. It is endowed with a range of historic architecture and is the site of Europe's greatest concentration of first-rate contemporary architecture. Once again a national capital, it is also one of the most exciting cities on the Continent, recent and rapid changes pushing through a transformation without peacetime parallel.

One of the grandest capitals in Europe for the first forty years of the last century, it then suffered appallingly from aerial bombardment and Soviet artillery. For the next forty years it was cruelly divided into two parts and became the focus of Cold War antagonism, a bizarre confrontation between an enclave of western libertarianism and hard-line Communism.

Since the Wall was breached in 1989 the city has been transformed beyond recognition. From being a largely charmless urban expanse still bearing the scars of war, it has become a vibrant, liveable city, the very model of a modern major metropolis. The two halves have been knitted together and cleaning and repair have revealed the patrimony of historic architecture to be among the finest in Central Europe.

The art collections, formerly split, dispersed and often housed in temporary premises, are now coming together in magnificently restored or newly-built galleries. Berlin possesses international art and antiquities of the highest importance, as well as incomparable collections of German art. The number and variety of museums and the quality of their holdings make Berlin among the world's most desired destinations for art lovers.

With three major opera houses and several orchestras, Berlin is a city where truly outstanding performances can be virtually guaranteed.

Music in Berlin at Christmas

20–27 December 2011 (my 137)
8 days • £3,120 (includes 4 opera tickets)
Lecturer: Tom Abbott

Numerous excellent collections of fine and decorative arts and first rate architecture.

A day excursion to Potsdam to see Frederick the Great's Sanssouci.

Includes tickets to *Tannhäuser*, *L'étoile* with Sir Simon Rattle, *Orpheus in the Underworld* and *The Magic Flute*. There is also an optional ballet performance (*Swan Lake*).

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.00pm from London Heathrow to Berlin Tegel. An orientation tour by coach passes landmarks such as the Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate, Pariser Platz and Unter den Linden. Visit the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church.

Day 2. In the morning, visit the Altes Museum, with Classical sculpture and artefacts in Schinkel's great building, then the Bode Museum, rising from the river Spree, which houses a rich collection of sculpture and paintings. *Evening opera at the Deutsche Oper:* ***Tannhäuser and the Singers' Contest at Wartburg*** *(Wagner), Donald Runnicles (conductor), Kristinn Sigmundsson (Landgraf Hermann), Peter Sieffert (Tannhäuser), Markus Brück (Wolfram), Clemens Bieber (Walther), Lenus Carlson (Biterolf), Paul Kaufmann (Heinrich).*

Day 3. The 'Kulturforum' developed before 1989 on wasteland close to the Wall as the site for several major museums, the State Library and Philharmonie (concert hall by Hans Scharoun). The Gemäldegalerie is one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters, and the Neue Nationalgalerie (Mies van der Rohe) houses outstanding 20th-century art. Potsdamer Platz, for 50 years an even greater expanse of wasteland, became in the 1990s Europe's greatest building project with an array of international architects participating. *Evening opera at the Staatsoper:* ***L'Etoile – der Stern*** *(Chabrier), Simon Rattle (conductor), Jean Paul Fouchécourt (King Ouf I.), Magdalena Kožená (Lazuli), Juanita Lascarro (Princess Laoula), Giovanni Furlanetto (Siroco), Douglas Nasrawi (Prince Herisson de Porc-Epic), Katharina Kammerloher (Aloès), Florian Hoffmann (Tapioca).*

Day 4. Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, is an outstanding Baroque and Rococo palace with splendid interiors. There is also the opportunity to visit the Berggruen Collection (classic modern art) or the Bröhan Collection (Art Deco). *Evening opera at the Staatsoper:* ***Orpheus in the Underwold*** *(Offenbach), Christoph Israel (conductor), Evelin Novak (Eurydice), Cornelius Obonya (Public Opinion), Stefan Kurt (Orpheus), Gustav Peter Wöhler (Pluto), Ben Becker (Jupiter), Hans-Michael Rehberg (Styx).*

Day 5. A walk passes through the oldest part of the city, the Nikolaiviertel, to 'Museums Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Neues Museum, the stunning new home to the Egyptian Museum (among others), restored and recreated by British architect David Chipperfield. The Alte Nationalgalerie superbly displays European painting of the 19th century including the finest collection of German Romantics. Walk back to the hotel passing some fine 18th-century buildings including the arsenal, opera house, royal palaces and cathedrals, before dinner at the Adlon, Berlin's most famous hotel.

Day 6: Christmas Day. Free day: several museums will be open including the Hamburger Bahnhof, a collection of contemporary art. There is also an optional walk in the Scheunenviertel on the theme of Jewish life and a visit to the Pergamon Museum, home of one of the world's finest collections of Near Eastern antiquities including the eponymous Hellenistic altar from Anatolia. Lunch is in the roof-top restaurant in the Reichstag, with the opportunity (without queuing) to walk around Foster's dome. In the evening, an *optional ballet performance at the Deutsche Oper:* ***Swan Lake*** *(Tchaikovsky).*

Day 7. Excursion to Potsdam which in the 18th century developed into Brandenburg-Prussia's second capital and acquired fine buildings, parks and gardens. Sanssouci, created as a retreat from the affairs of state by Frederick the Great, is among the finest

18th-century complexes of gardens, palaces and pavilions to be found anywhere. Visit his single-storey palace atop terraces of fruit trees, the Chinese Tea House and the orangery and see the city centre with its Dutch Quarter and Neo-Classical buildings. *Evening opera at the Staatsoper: **The Magic Flute** (Mozart), Julien Salemkour (conductor), Alexander Vinogradov (Sarastro), Joel Prieto (Tamino), Íride Martínez (Queen of the Night), Maite Alberola (Pamina), Gyula Orendt (Papageno), Narine Yeghiyan (Papagena), Abdellah Lasri (Monostatos).*

Day 8. A coach tour to parts of Berlin not yet seen, largely in the former eastern sector. Visit the Jewish Museum in the celebrated and expressive building by Daniel Libeskind. Fly at c. 4.30pm arriving at Heathrow at c. 5.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,120 (deposit £350). This includes: tickets to 4 operas costing c. £304; air travel on British Airways flights (Airbus A319); travel by private coach with some use of the metro; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners and 2 interval snacks, with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums; all tips for drivers, guides, waiters; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £390. Price without flights £2,990.**

Hotel: an elegant hotel decorated in Regency style, close to Unter den Linden. Rooms are of a good size and excellent standard.

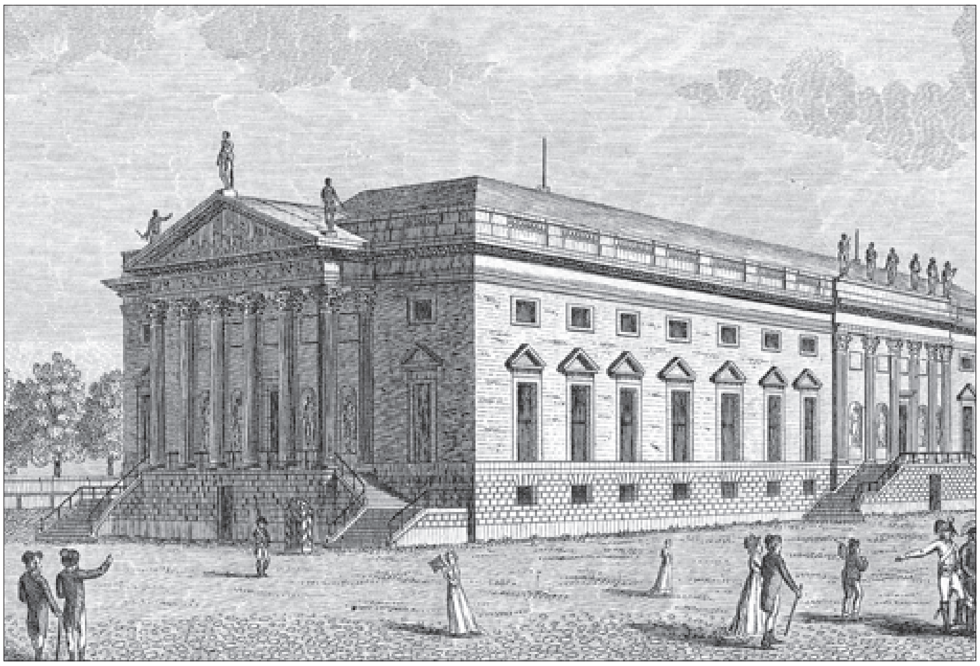
How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in art galleries. Average distance by coach per day: 11 miles.

Weather: very unpredictable, but it will be cold and probably freezing at least some of the time.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

CHRISTMAS

Vienna 15
Christmas in the Desert 31
Budapest 74
Palermo 122
St Petersburg 139
York 175



The Staatsoper, 18th-century engraving.

MUSIC IN BERLIN

14–19 February 2012 (MY 163)
6 days • £2,380
(including tickets to 5 performances)
Lecturers: Professor Jan Smaczny & Tom Abbott

Excellent collections of fine and decorative arts and first rate architecture.

Accompanied by two lecturers – a musicologist and an art historian.

Includes tickets to *Otello*, *Così fan Tutte*, the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, and the Staatskapelle Berlin conducted by Daniel Barenboim.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.00am from London Heathrow to Berlin Tegel. Take an orientation tour by coach: Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate, Pariser Platz and Unter den Linden. Visit the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church.

Day 2. Walk through the oldest part of the city to 'Museums Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Neues Museum, recently restored and recreated by British architect David Chipperfield, and the Alte Nationalgalerie with European painting of the 19th century including the finest collection of German Romantics. Free afternoon. *Opera at the Staatsoper: **Eugen Onegin** (Tchaikovsky), Pietari Inkinen (conductor), Simone Schröder (Larina), Anna Samuil (Tatjana), Roman Trekel (Eugen Onegin).*

Day 3. Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, is an outstanding Baroque and Rococo palace with splendid interiors. Free afternoon. *Concert at the Philharmonie with the Berlin Philharmonic, Sir Simon Rattle (conductor): Debussy, Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faune; Dvořák, The Golden Spinning-Wheel; Schoenberg, Verklärte Nacht; Elgar, Enigma Variations.*

Day 4. Potsdamer Platz, for 50 years a great expanse of wasteland, became in the 1990s Europe's greatest building project with an array of international architects participating. The 'Kulturforum' developed before 1989 on land close to the Wall as the site for several major museums, the State Library and Philharmonie. Visit the Gemäldegalerie, one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters. Free afternoon. *Opera at the Staatsoper;* ***The Marriage of Figaro*** *(Mozart), Daniel Barenboim (conductor), Artur Rucinski (Graf Almaviva), Dorothea Röschmann (Gräfin Almaviva), Anna Prohaska (Susanna), Vito Priante (Figaro), Christine Schäfer (Cherubino).*

Day 5. Walk to the Pergamon Museum, home of one of the world's finest collections of Near Eastern antiquities including the eponymous Hellenistic altar from Anatolia. Free afternoon: suggested visits include the Altes Museum (Classical sculpture and artefacts) and the Bode Museum (sculpture and paintings). *Opera at the Deutsche Oper:* ***A Masked Ball*** *(Verdi), Jacques Lacombe (conductor), Yonghoon Lee (Gustav III, King of Sweden), Thomas Hampson (Count Ankarstöm), Tatjana Serjan (Amelia), Ewa Wolak (Ulrika Arvedson), Heidi Stober (Oscar), Simon Pauly (Christian).*

Day 6. *Morning concert at the Staatsoper (Schillertheater) with Daniel Baremboim (piano): Schubert, selected works.* Lunch in the rooftop restaurant in the Reichstag, with the opportunity (without queuing) to walk around Foster's dome. Fly at c. 6.00pm arriving London Heathrow at c. 7.10pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,380 (deposit £250). This includes: music tickets costing c. £340; air travel on scheduled Lufthansa flights (Airbus A319); travel by private coach with some use of the metro; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturers. **Single supplement £190** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,220.**

Hotel: a stylish but traditional hotel close to Unter den Linden. Rooms are of a good size and excellent standard.

Music tickets: all tickets are confirmed.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in art galleries. Average distance by coach per day: 5 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

BERLIN, POTSDAM, DRESDEN

ART & ARCHITECTURE IN BRANDENBURG & SAXONY

21–28 September 2012 (MZ 370)
8 days • £2,440
Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremeier

Studies the former capitals of Brandenburg-Prussia and Saxony.

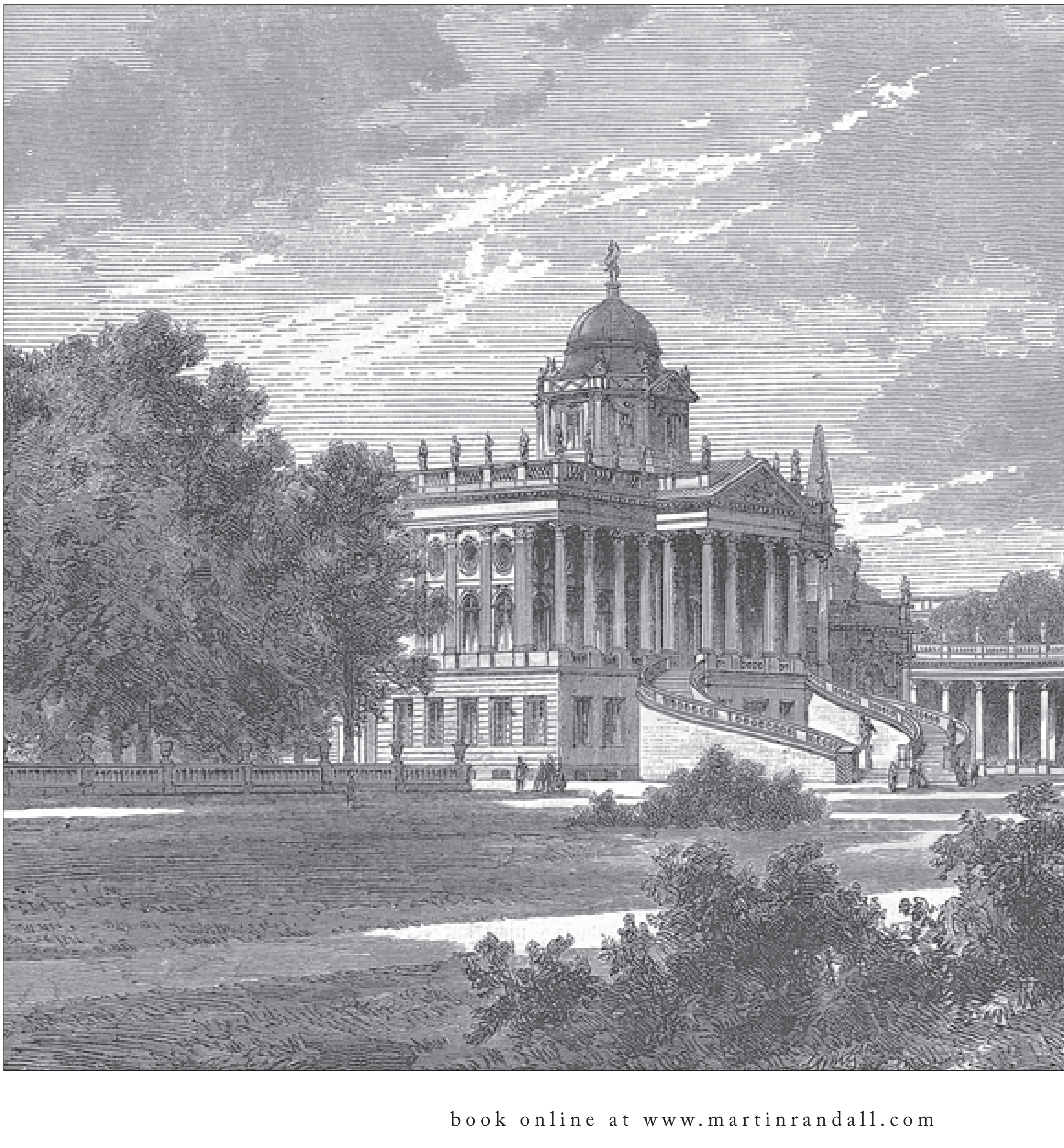
Both have immensely rich holdings of fine and decorative arts and architecture.

Rebuilding and restoration continues to transform both cities.

Berlin is an upstart among European cities. Until the seventeenth century it was a small town of little importance, but by dint of ruthless and energetic rule, backed by the military prowess for which it became a byword, the hitherto unimportant state of Brandenburg-Prussia became one of the most powerful in Germany. By the middle of the eighteenth century, with Frederick the Great at the helm, it was successfully challenging the great powers of Europe.

Ambitious campaigns were instituted to endow the capital with grandeur appropriate to its new status. Palaces, public buildings and new districts were planned and constructed. At nearby Potsdam, Frederick's second capital, he created the park of Sanssouci, among the finest ensembles of gardens, palaces and pavilions to be found anywhere. Early in the nineteenth century Berlin became of international importance architecturally when Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the greatest of Neo-Classical architects, designed several buildings there.

Berlin has museums of art and antiquities of the highest importance. The Pergamon Museum and Gemäldegalerie are among the best of their kind and the recently opened Neues Museum, designed by David Chipperfield, provides an excellent setting for



Sansoucci, late-19th-century wood engraving.

the Egyptian collection. The reunited city is now one of the most exciting in Europe. A huge amount of work has been done to knit together the two halves of the city and to rebuild and restore monuments which had been neglected for decades.

Dresden was the capital of the Electorate of Saxony. Though it suffered terrible destruction during the War, rebuilding and restoration now allow the visitor to appreciate once again something of its former beauty. The great domed Frauenkirche has now been triumphantly reconstructed. Moreover, the collections of fine and applied arts are magnificent. The Old Masters Gallery in Dresden is of legendary richness, the Green Vault is the finest surviving treasury of goldwork and objets d'art, and the Albertinum reopened in 2010 to display a fine collection of nineteenth and twentieth-century art.

Itinerary

Day 1: Dresden. Fly at c. 12.30pm from London Heathrow to Dresden. Take an introductory walk around the old centre of Dresden. First of three nights in Dresden.

Day 2: Dresden. The Zwinger is a unique Baroque confection, part pleasure palace, part arena for festivities and part museum for cherished collections. Visit the excellent porcelain museum and the fabulously rich Old Masters Gallery. The Green Vault of the Residenzschloss displays one of the world's finest princely treasuries.

Day 3: Dresden, Pillnitz, Groß-Sedlitz. Take a boat trip to Pillnitz, a summer palace in Chinese Rococo style, with park, gardens and collections of decorative art. Visit the Bastei, a magnificent viewing point above the river Elbe. Drive back to Dresden, visiting the terraced garden of Groß-Sedlitz en route.

Day 4: Dresden, Berlin. Stroll in Dresden-Neustadt on the right bank of the Elbe, little damaged in the War. Visit the domed Frauenkirche, the Protestant cathedral. Leave for Berlin by coach in the afternoon. Survey the historic architecture along and around Unter den Linden: the Arsenal, Schinkel's Guardhouse, Frederick the Great's Opera House, the Gendarmenmarkt with twin churches and concert hall. Recent additions include the British Embassy (Michael Wilford) and the Holocaust Memorial. First of four nights in Berlin.

Day 5: Berlin. Drive to Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, an outstanding summer palace built with a Baroque core and Rococo wings, fine interiors, paintings by Watteau, extensive gardens, pavilions and a mausoleum. The Berggruen Collection of Picasso and classic modern art is also here. Some free time.

Day 6: Berlin. In the 1990s Potsdamer Platz was Europe's greatest building project and showcases an international array of architects (Piano, Isozaki, Rogers, Moneo). Scattered around the nearby 'Kulturforum' are museums, the State Library and the Philharmonie concert hall (Hans Scharoun 1956–63). The Gemäldegalerie houses one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters. Choose between the Neue Nationalgalerie (changing exhibitions in a Mies van der Rohe building) or the Museum of Musical Instruments. In the evening, visit Norman Foster's glass dome capping the Reichstag and have dinner in the roof-top restaurant.

Day 7: Potsdam. The enclosed park of Sanssouci was created as a retreat from the affairs of state by Frederick the Great. It consists of gardens, parkland, palaces, pavilions and auxiliary buildings. In the afternoon, visit his relatively modest single-storey palace atop terraces of fruit trees, the exquisite Chinese teahouse and the large and imposing Neues Palais. Drive through Potsdam town centre with its Dutch quarter and cathedral by Schinkel.

Day 8: Berlin. Spend the morning on 'Museums Island': the Altes Museum, a major Neo-Classical building by Schinkel, displays the collection of Classical antiquities; the Alte Nationalgalerie houses an excellent collection of 19th-century paintings and sculptures; the Neues Museum is the new home of the Egyptian Museum (famous for the bust of Nefertiti); the Pergamon Museum has one of the world's finest collections of Near Eastern antiquities, including the eponymous altar. Fly from Berlin Brandenburg International to Heathrow, arriving c. 5.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,440 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on Lufthansa (operated by bmi) flights (Airbus A319); travel by private coach and metro within Berlin; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; tips for waiters, drivers, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £280. Price without flights £2,270**.

Hotels: in Dresden (3 nights): a good modern 4-star hotel excellently located across the river from the famous skyline; in Berlin (4 nights): a stylish but traditional 5-star hotel located close to Unter den Linden.

Music: details of opera performances will be circulated nearer the time. We will endeavour to obtain tickets as requested.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking required and standing in museums. Average distance by coach per day: 41 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

ART & MUSIC IN DRESDEN

26 May–1 June 2012 (MY 265)
7 days • £2,390
Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremeier

Once one of the most admired cities in Europe, rebuilding and restoration has reached a peak.

Dresden has outstanding art collections and fine 18th- & 19th-century architecture.

Two concerts at two excellent venues (Semperoper & Schauspielhaus) and the option of attending more concerts.

Excursions to the surrounding area.

Talks by a German art historian.

Dresden's greatness as a city of the arts was very much the creation of a single man, Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony 1694–1733. Though founded at the beginning of the thirteenth century, for its first five hundred years it was a minor city of little distinction.

His pillaging of the state treasury to feed his reckless extravagance was both symbol and to some extent the cause of his dismal record in most areas of statecraft, but his achievements as builder, patron and collector rank him among the most munificent of European rulers. Great architecture, a picture collection of legendary richness, magnificent accumulations of precious metalwork and ceramics (porcelain was manufactured here for the first time in Europe) and a glorious musical life transformed Dresden into one of the most admired and visited cities in Europe and a major destination on the Grand Tour.

If to a somewhat lesser degree, subsequent rulers of Saxony continued the tradition of cultural embellishment (and political ineptitude: they had a tiresome habit of joining the losing side). In the nineteenth century, 'the Florence on the Elbe' acquired buildings by Schinkel and Semper, and Weber and Wagner were directors of the opera house. In the twentieth century, Richard Strauss added to its illustrious musical history.

Then in February 1945 a tragically propitious set of circumstances conspired to make the air raid on Dresden the most 'successful' of Allied bombing missions. Most of the art collections had been removed to safety but 80% of the old centre was destroyed. Under the Communist regime a few of the chief monuments were grudgingly restored, but since unification the painstaking process of rebuilding and restoration has accelerated.

The great dome of the Protestant Cathedral, the Frauenkirche, again dominates the skyline, and the Green Vault in the royal palace again displays the unequalled magnificence of the treasury. Significantly, rank and file buildings are steadily being recreated; the glory of Dresden lay as much in the lesser buildings as in the major ones. Some striking new architecture is being added, notably the all-glass car factory in the historic centre and the Foster & Partners railway station.

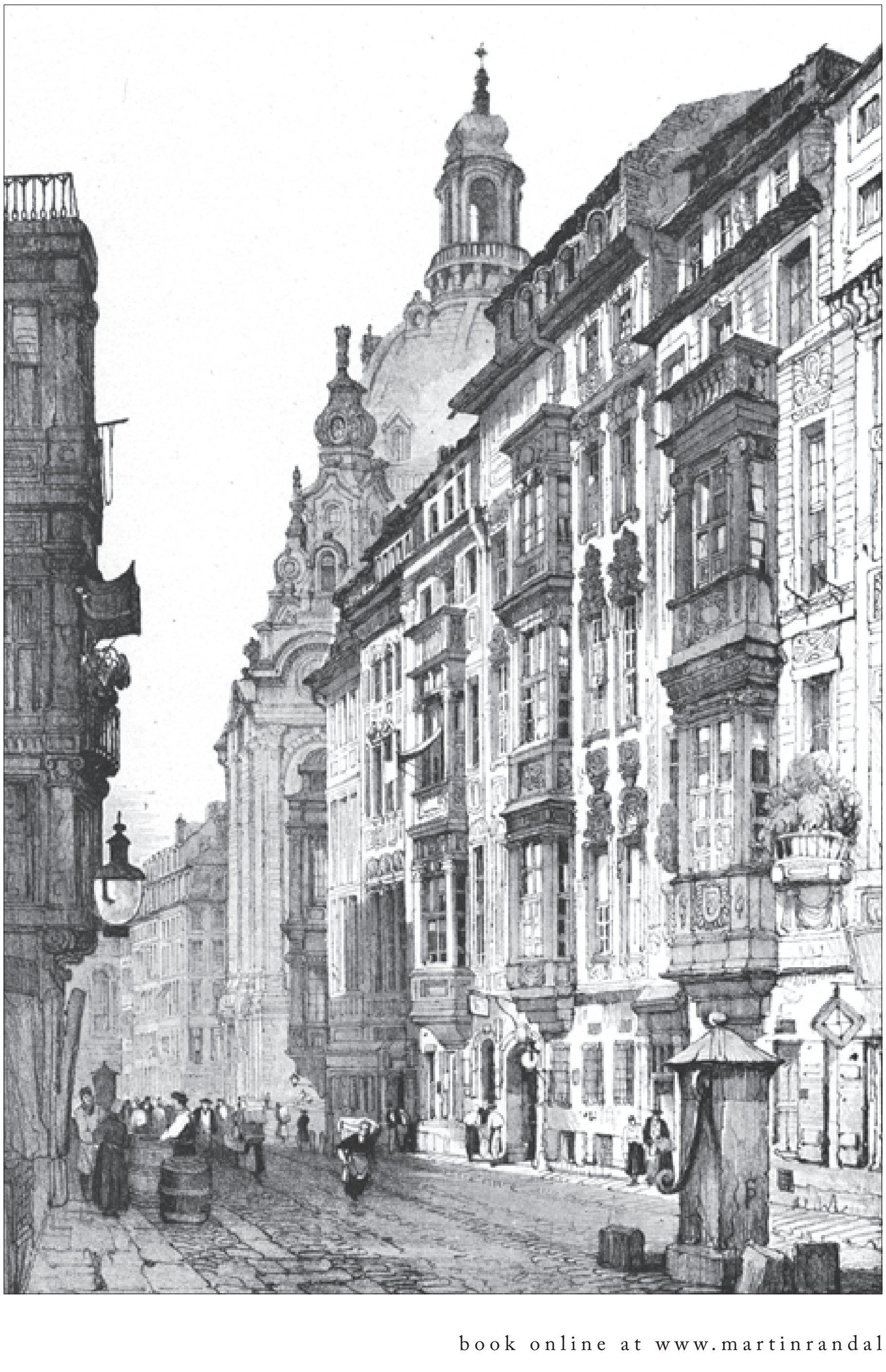
Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 12.30pm from London Heathrow to Dresden. An introductory walk of the Altstadt followed by dinner.

Day 2: Dresden. Visit the Catholic church and the great domed Frauenkirche, whose restoration is now complete. In the afternoon visit the New Masters Gallery in the Albertinum, reopened after extensive renovations following flood damage. *Evening concert at the Semperoper with the Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre (programme to be confirmed).*

Day 3: Pillnitz, Pirna. Travel by boat upstream to Pillnitz, a summer palace in Chinese Rococo style, with collections of decorative art and a riverside park. Continue to Pirna and see the late Gothic church of St Mary. Free evening in Dresden or *optional concert (to be confirmed).*

Day 4: Dresden. Restoration of the royal palace



Dresden, lithograph after Samuel Prout 1839.

OPERA IN DRESDEN & LEIPZIG

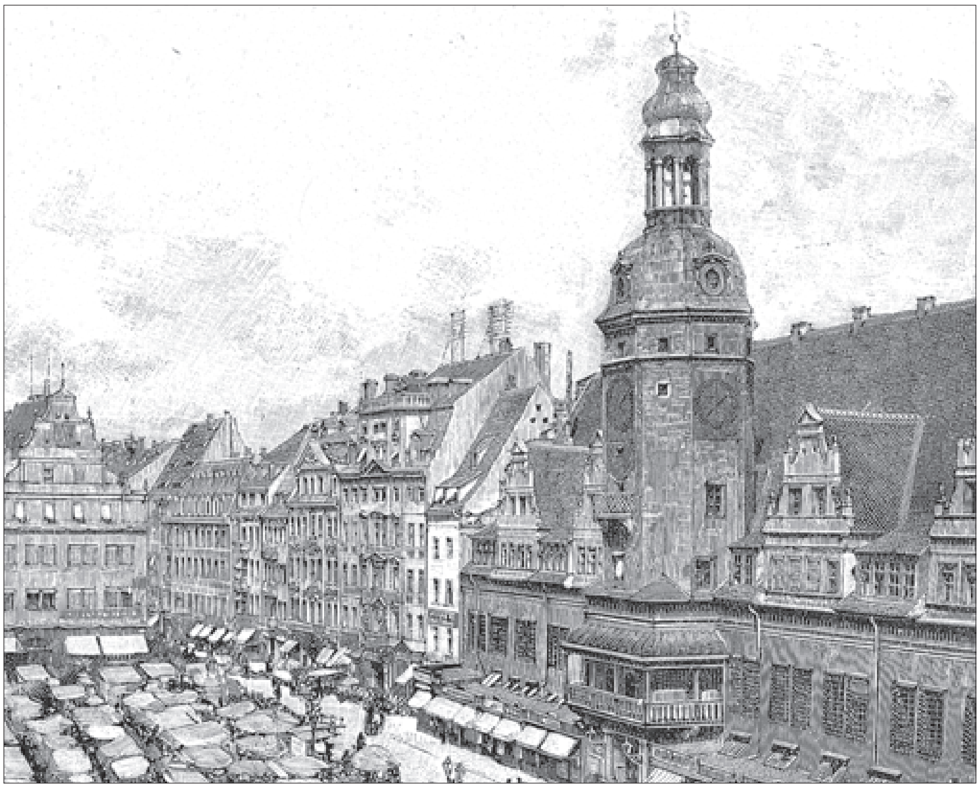
& THE ART TREASURES OF SAXONY

29 April–5 May 2012 (MY 230)
7 days • £2,230
(including 4 opera tickets)
Lecturer: Roderick Swanston

Rigoletto **(Verdi),** ***L'elisir d'Amore*** **(Donizetti),** ***Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*** **(Brecht/Weill) and** ***The Magic Flute*** **(Mozart).**

Rebuilding, restoration and refurbishment has wrought wonders in these once shattered cities.

Led by a musicologist.



Leipzig, Market Square & Old Town Hall, wood engraving c. 1890.

Since the earliest days of opera, the Electoral Court at Dresden was one of its most enthusiastic and extravagant patrons. The same could not be said of the dour, God-fearing mercantile city of Leipzig (J.S. Bach is not noted for his operatic compositions). Only relatively late did it allow itself the thrills of secular music drama.

But the two great Saxon cities, which had such different histories and cultures, have in our era been twin pillars of operatic excellence in the heart of Germany. Despite the grim post-war years and the traumatic changes since re-unification, their opera companies are flourishing again. Dresden has managed to maintain the traditional salaried company system, which gives rise to high standards in all departments, and the Leipzig opera house has enjoyed a resurgence with a succession of much-acclaimed productions.

Eastern Germany is being transformed by comprehensive reconstruction and painstaking restoration. The charms of those pre-war buildings which survived into the Communist era used to be veiled by dirt and neglect; now they are emerging as from a chrysalis. Elsewhere 'historic' buildings pop up anew, entirely rebuilt, but amazingly persuasive in their deceit. Leipzig in particular has become a city of pavement cafés and stylish shops, a world away from its recent past.

And then there are the art museums, with collections of international importance. The Old Masters Gallery and the Green Vault at Dresden are legendary, but there is much to delight in at many museums in both cities.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 12.30pm from London Heathrow to Dresden. Overnight Dresden.

Day 2: Dresden. Morning walk with a local guide includes the Zwinger, a unique Baroque confection, a pleasure palace, arena for festivities and museum for cherished collections. Other buildings of the Electoral Court include the Stable Courtyard and the

has also advanced, and the wonderful contents of the Green Vault, one of the world's finest princely treasuries, are now on display. *Optional evening concert (to be confirmed).*

Day 5: Meissen. Drive downstream to Meissen, ancient capital of Dukes of Saxony and location of the discovery of hard-paste porcelain. The largely 15th-century hilltop castle overlooking the Elbe, the Albrechtsburg, is one of the first to be more residential than defensive, and within the complex is a fine Gothic cathedral. Visit the porcelain factory and museum before returning to Dresden. *Evening song recital at the Schauspielhaus with Angelika Kirchschlager (mezzo-soprano): songs by Brahms, Schubert, Wolf, Dvořák and Mahler.*

Day 6: Dresden. Visit the Zwinger, a unique Baroque confection, a pleasure palace, arena for festivities and museum for cherished collections. See the Old Masters Gallery, one of the finest collections in Europe, particularly strong on Italian and Netherlandish painting. Drive through one of the historic suburbs on the way to lunch. Free afternoon: we suggest a visit to the Porcelain Museum. *Optional evening concert (to be confirmed.*

Day 7. Fly from Dresden to London Heathrow, arriving c. 12.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,390 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on Lufthansa flights (Canadair Regional jet 900); private coach for transfers and excursions; concert tickets costing c. £170; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, three dinners and two lunches with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £290. Price without flights £2,250.**

Hotel: a traditional 5-star hotel in a reconstructed Baroque building, tastefully decorated, with a friendly, personal atmosphere, 20 minutes walk from the Semperoper. Rooms vary in size.

How strenuous? Vehicular access is restricted in the city centres. Participants are expected to walk to the concert venues and there is a lot of walking and standing around in art galleries and museums. Average distance by coach per day: 12 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

Music: this tour coincides with the Dresden Festspiele, but the full programme has not yet been announced. Tickets for the two concerts which we have selected from the advance programme will be confirmed in the autumn.

Catholic Church. The rebuilding of the great domed Frauenkirche is now complete. Some free time. *Evening opera at the Semperoper:* ***Rigoletto*** *(Verdi).* Overnight Dresden.

Day 3: Dresden. Visit the Rezidenzschloss, one of the world's finest princely treasuries, once again displayed in the Green Vault. *Evening opera at the Semperoper:* ***L'elisir d'amore*** *(Donizetti).* Overnight Dresden.

Day 4: Dresden, Leipzig. Visit the Old Masters Gallery in the Zwinger, one of the best collections in Germany. In the afternoon, drive from Dresden to Leipzig. First of three nights in Leipzig.

Day 5: Leipzig. Join a guided walk around the city centre to include the Marketplace and Old City Hall, Stock Exchange and the churches of St Nicholas and St Thomas (where J.S. Bach was choir master) and the Bach Museum. Free afternoon: perhaps visit the Fine Arts Museum. *Evening opera at the Leipzig Opera House:* ***Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*** *(Brecht/Weill).* Overnight Leipzig.

Day 6: Leipzig. Tour the recently re-opened Museum of Musical Instruments and visit the Mendelssohn House. Free afternoon. *Evening opera at the Leipzig Opera House:* ***The Magic Flute*** *(Mozart).*

Day 7: Leipzig. Fly from Berlin to London Heathrow, arriving c. 2.00pm.

Practicalities

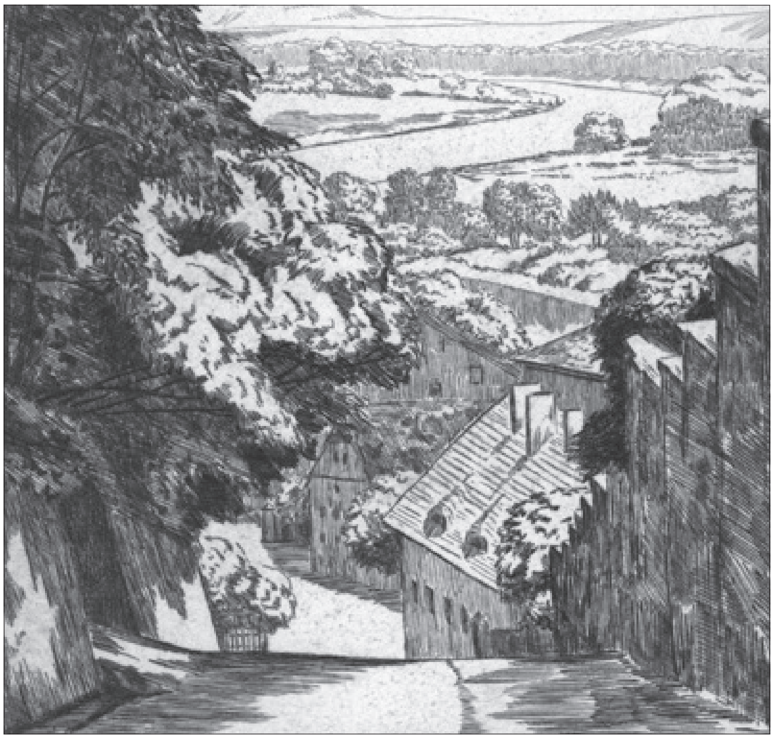
Price: £2,230 (deposit £250). This includes: 4 opera tickets costing c. £290; air travel (economy class) on Lufthansa flights (aircraft: Canadair Regional jet900 and Airbus A319); private coach for transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 4 dinners, including wine, water and coffee; admission to museums, etc.; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £200. Price without flights £2,080.**

Hotels: in Dresden (3 nights): a good modern 4-star hotel excellently located across the river from the famous skyline. In Leipzig (3 nights): a good hotel, part of an international chain ideally located in the centre.

How strenuous? Vehicular access is restricted in the city centres and participants are expected to walk to the opera houses. Average distance by coach per day: 46 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

MUSIC IN THE SAXON HILLS



Etching c. 1920.

13–19 September 2012 (mz 355)
7 days • £2,120
Lecturers: David Vickers & Tom Abbott

A new tour for 2012.

A remarkable music festival with internationally renowned musicians in a little-visited region.

Beautiful and varied landscapes, unspoilt old towns, magnificent Gothic churches.

Exclusive arrangements. Accompanied by two lecturers, a cultural historian and a musicologist.

The Erzgebirge is a forgotten region of eastern Germany. The mining which for centuries sustained Saxony as one of the richer territories of Europe has gone. The younger generation have deserted in droves. But you will rarely come across Germans who are more friendly. And appreciation of music seems to be something in their blood, not learnt, not a taste acquired, but lived and breathed.

Few of the town centres have been prettified, and though neglected and drear, the more perceptive visitor can enjoy the authentic, age-old vernacular. But it needs no special learning to be impressed by the huge Gothic churches at the centre of every community. Often at the highest point, reached up mossy steps and cobbled alleys, these are the venues for the remarkable Erzgebirge ('ore mountains') Musikfestival. It is the brainchild of Christoph Rademann, conductor of the Dresden Chamber Choir, the Dresden Baroque Orchestra and the RIAS Kammerchor. The aim is to bring good music to people who appreciate it, build a bridge between local tradition and international quality of performance and to bring together music, landscape and architecture. They want a mixed audience of locals, national fans (many come down from Berlin for the day) and a few foreigners. MRT was their first and only choice of English tour operator.

No such quota applies to musicians, with Harry Christophers' Sixteen and the King's Singers joining the Regensburg Domspatzen, the famed cathedral choir, as well as Rademann's Dresden-based choir and orchestra all performing in 2012.

The landscape is a striking feature, an ever changing sequence of rolling hills, dramatic mountains, pine forests, undulating green pastures and flat grassland. Driving along the ever winding, rising and falling roads provides a stunning sequence of varied vistas.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at about noon from London Heathrow to Dresden. Drive to the remotely located and charming town of Annaberg-Buchholz where this tour is based throughout.

Day 2: Annaberg-Buchholz, Marienberg. In the morning there is a guided walk around the town centre including the parish church, one of the finest of late Gothic buildings with complex vaulting and superb furnishings. There is some free time before the coach leaves for Marienberg for dinner. *Concert in Marienberg* *with The Sixteen, Harry Christophers (conductor): The Messiah (Handel).*

Day 3: Augustusburg, Zschopau. Drive to Erdmannsdorf to take the cable car to Schloss Augustusburg. More castle than Schloss, this large mediaeval complex has fine views over the surrounding hills. Some free time. *Concert in Zschopau with the Dresden Baroque Orchestra, Annette Dasch (soprano), Hans-Christoph Rademann (conductor): Bach: solo cantatas, Orchestral Suite No.2, Brandenburg Concerto.*

Day 4: Schneeberg, Pöhlberg. Drive to Schneeberg where there is the option of a musically embellished Sunday service. Gentle walk on the nearby mountain, the Pöhlberg, with breathtaking views into the surrounding hills whose mines once brought wealth to this region. Free afternoon. *Concert in Schneeberg with the Regensburger Domspatzen: Catholic* a cappella *church music.*

Day 5: Annaberg, Zwönitz. A morning of exclusives: the artistic director of the Festival, Hans-Christoph Rademann gives a talk to our group, and afterwards there is a private organ recital in Annaberg cathedral. Coach to Zwönitz for dinner. *Concert in Lößnitz by the King's Singers (programme to be announced).*

Day 6: Chemnitz, Grünhain. Visit the small but remarkable art museum in Chemnitz, particularly good for German Expressionists, and the *Jugendstil* Villa Esche, designed in every detail by Henry Van de Velde and one of the few remaining buildings of its kind. *Concert in Grünhain: Dresden Chamber Choir, Hans-Christoph Rademan, Israelsbrünnlein (Johann Herrmann Schein).*

Day 7. Fly from Dresden to London Heathrow, arriving around noon.

Practicalities

Price: £2,120 (deposit £200). This includes: 5 concert tickets; air travel (economy class) on Lufthansa flights (aircraft: Airbus A320); private coach; accommodation as below; breakfasts, 5 dinners and 2 lunches, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips and taxes; the services of two lecturers. **Single supplement £60**, **price without flights £1,960.**

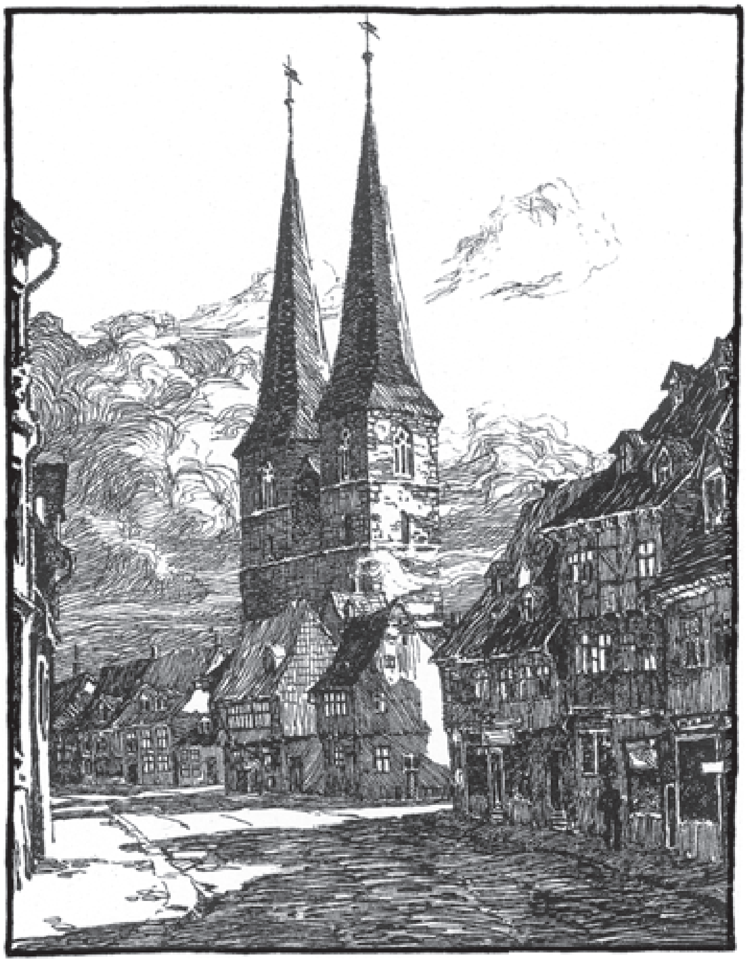
Hotel. A 4-star hotel in the centre of Annaberg-Buchholz. There are no luxury hotels in the region but this is the best of them, and while it is fairly basic, it is functional, clean, adequately comfortable and has helpful staff.

How strenuous? Quite a lot of walking, sometimes on roughly paved and hilly streets. Average distance by coach per day: 62 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

MITTELDEUTSCHLAND

WEIMAR & THE TOWNS OF THURINGIA & SACHSEN-ANHALT



Quedlinburg, etching 1920.

20–28 July 2012 (MY 313)
9 days • £2,270
Lecturer: Dr Jarl Kremeier

A trawl through little-known and largely unspoilt towns at the heart of Germany.

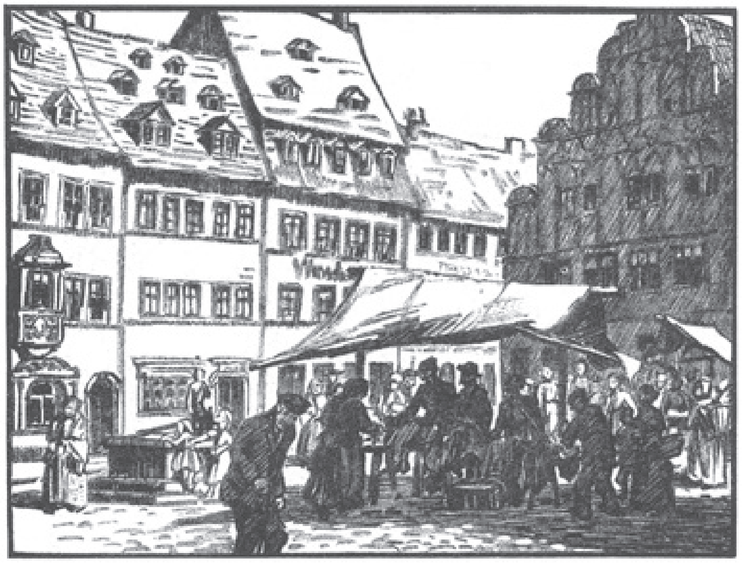
Great mediaeval churches, Baroque and Neo-Classical palaces, enchanting streetscape, fine art collections, beautiful countryside.

Sachsen-Anhalt and Thuringia, the Länder in the middle of Germany, are predominantly rural, with rolling hills, deciduous woodland, compact red-roofed villages and ancient small-scale cities. Only patchily affected by the ravages of war and industrialization, much of the historic architecture remained intact throughout the twentieth century. Forty years in the chill embrace of the East German state further impeded 'progress'. The result is that at the heart of Europe's richest and most modern nation is a region which feels strangely provincial and archaic.

Thuringia was one of the five major states of early mediaeval Germany, but by the end of the Middle Ages it had fragmented into numerous little statelets and free cities. The history of Sachsen-Anhalt was similar: during the tenth century 'Old' Saxony was the most powerful of the German duchies and formed the kernel of the German nation, but loss of pre-eminence was followed by subdivision. From the sixteenth century both Länder consisted of innumerable principalities and independent cities, and were political and economic backwaters – though in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Bach family dominated music making here.

And one small dukedom in particular made a quite exceptional contribution to art and thought. Weimar played host to J.S. Bach, Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Liszt, Nietzsche, Richard Strauss, Walter Gropius and many other great names.

For those who knew East Germany before 1991, the subsequent changes appear little short of miraculous – major upgrading of the infrastructure, transformation of the built environment through cleaning, painting and wholesale restoration, recrudescence of commercial and social life. But those who come to the territory for the first time might be less enamoured. It is as if the region hasn't fully



Weimar, lithograph 1920 after von Ellen Torngrist.

awoken from a half-century sleep, a corrosive slumber which allowed much of the historic fabric of the towns and villages to slide into desuetude and dereliction.

Yet in an odd sort of way the dilapidation contributes to a powerful sense of the past, and an air of authenticity which can be lost in places more thoroughly spruced up emanates from this fascinating, constantly surprising, frequently beautiful and richly endowed region.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.00pm from London Heathrow to Hanover. Drive to Quedlinburg. First of three nights in Quedlinburg.

Day 2: Quedlinburg, Gernrode. Quedlinburg is a wonderfully preserved mediaeval town. The castle hill is crowned by the church of St Servatius, begun 1070, and contains one of Germany's finest treasuries. See also the Gothic church of St Benedict in the market square and the Wipertikirche with its 10th-cent. crypt. At nearby Gernrode is one of the oldest churches in Germany, and one of the most beautiful, St Cyriakus, begun AD 961. Overnight Quedlinburg.

Day 3: Halberstadt, Blankenburg. Halberstadt was a major city in the Middle Ages, and the cathedral is the largest French-style Gothic church in Germany after Cologne; the treasury is exceptional. Blankenburg is an idyllic little spa town in the foothills of the Harz mountains with two Baroque palaces, the creation of a younger son of the Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel dynasty who made Blankenburg his capital. Overnight Quedlinburg.

Day 4: Mühlhausen. Drive in the morning across the Harz mountains to Thuringia, passing forested vistas, half-timbered hamlets and patches of pasturage. Mühlhausen is astonishing, one of the most delightful and evocative towns in northern Europe, preserving its complete mediaeval wall, an abundance of half-timbered buildings and six Gothic churches. Walk along a section of the wall, visit the soaring, five-aisled church of St Mary, and St Blasius, the church were Bach was organist 1707–08. Overnight Mühlhausen.

Day 5: Gotha, Arnstadt. A Residenzstadt within the principality of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Gotha is dominated by Schloss Friedenstein, which has fine interiors, a picture collection and a Baroque theatre. Walk down a processional way to the Hauptmarkt with its Renaissance town hall. Arnstadt, the oldest town in eastern Germany, has fine streetscape on a sloping site with the church where Bach was organist 1703–7; the Early Gothic Church of Our Lady and a palace with a remarkable display of 18th-century dolls illustrating social hierarchy. First of five nights in Weimar.

Day 6: Weimar. Two centuries of enlightened patronage by members of the ducal family enabled the little city-state of Weimar to be home to many great writers, philosophers, composers and artists. Today, visit the Stadtkirche, the main church with an altarpiece by Cranach, Goethe's house, a beautifully preserved sequence of interiors and garden, the ducal Schloss, with Neo-Classical interiors and a fine art museum, and an English-style landscaped park with Goethe's summer house. Overnight Weimar.

Day 7: Erfurt. Capital of Thuringia, Erfurt well preserves its pre-20th-century appearance with a variety of streetscape and architecture from mediaeval to Jugendstil. Outstanding are the Krämerbrücke, a 14th-century bridge piled with houses and shops, and the cathedral, framing Germany's largest set of mediaeval stained glass. Visit also the Severikirche, the friary of St Augustine where Luther was a monk, the Predigerkirche which retains its late mediaeval appearance intact, and the 17th-cent. hilltop citadel. Overnight Weimar.

Day 8: Weimar. A walk includes Haus am Horn and Van de Velde's School of Arts and Crafts from which the Bauhaus emerged. Free afternoon in this beautiful little city. Among the many other museums to choose from are the Bauhaus Museum, the 18th-century Wittumspalais, the Schiller House and Goethe's Gartenhaus. An excursion to Buchenwald concentration camp can be arranged. Overnight Weimar.

Day 9: Naumburg. Architecturally, Naumburg Cathedral is an outstanding embodiment of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic, but its great importance lies in its 13th-century sculpture, including statues of the founders, among the most powerful and realistic of the Middle Ages. Fly from Berlin, arriving London Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,270 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled bmi and British Airways flights (aircraft: Embraer RJ145, Airbus 319); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to museums, sites, etc.; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers, etc.; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £180. Price without flights £2,110.**

Hotels: in Quedlinburg (3 nights): a family run hotel converted from a half-timbered house on the main square, unpretentiously but tastefully decorated with well-equipped rooms and a good restaurant; no lift. In Mühlhausen (1 night): converted from a brewery in the centre of the town, characterfully rustic dining area and bar, simple but spacious rooms; some rooms are not accessible by lift. In Weimar (4 nights): a modern hotel, situated by the park and on the edge of the town centre. Rooms are elegant and comfortable, though somewhat contemporary in design.

How strenuous? This is a fairly long tour and there is quite a lot of walking required, some of it uneven ground. Average distance by coach per day: 56 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

GERMAN ROMANESQUE

WITH CAROLINGIAN & OTTONIAN PRELUDES

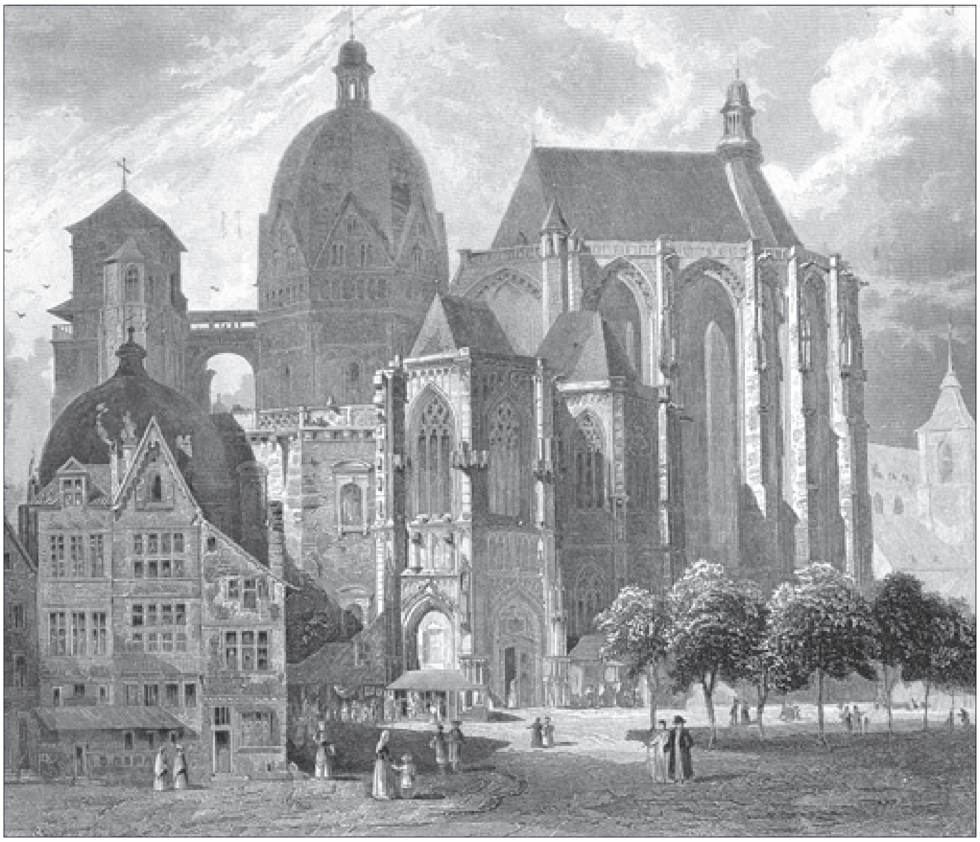
24–30 June 2012 (MY 295)
7 days • £2,180
Lecturer: to be confirmed

The Rhineland produced some of the most adventurous and sophisticated architecture of the Romanesque era.

Small parish churches, great cathedrals, city and country, buildings, paintings and metalwork.

Intensive and wonderfully rich study tour.

First-class rail travel on Eurostar.



Aachen Cathedral, mid-19th-century steel engraving.

To a percipient observer of Europe in the eleventh century, it might have seemed that the Kingdom of Germany was poised to become the dominant power in Europe. By all the indicators of economic development, demography and governance, the region was outpacing other embryonic nation states.

Such a view would have been lent weight by a survey of the construction industry. Not only was the number of projects remarkable, but some of the most ambitious and innovative architecture in Europe was being created in the German lands, especially in the Rhineland. Wealthy abbeys, burgeoning cities and ambitious princes and emperors were instigating buildings of unprecedented size and magnificence.

Romanesque architecture is distinguished by massiveness of construction and noble simplicity of form, but these characteristics often mask a high degree of structural adventurousness and very considerable sophistication of design, symbolism and iconography. Nowhere was this more so than in Germany, where many churches have high towers and spires, complex ground plans and evidence of bold experiments in engineering. So keen were German builders to develop the full potential of round-arched architecture that they were not attracted to the new forms and techniques of Gothic until well into the thirteenth century, nearly a hundred years after their appearance in France.

A subsidiary theme of the tour – and an essential prelude to Romanesque – is the art and architecture of the Carolingian era. By the time of his death in AD 814, Charlemagne, King of the Franks and self-proclaimed Roman Emperor, had amassed territory that stretched from the Atlantic to Bohemia, and from the Baltic Sea to Central Italy.

Charlemagne had a passionate interest in the culture and institutions of ancient Rome and his belief that he was reviving the Roman Empire found expression in his attempts to emulate its literature and art. The Dark Ages soon closed in again on the Carolingian Empire and its visible remains are few but fascinating. The Ottonian revival of the Empire a century and a half later was a more immediate precursor of Romanesque.

The Rhine with its tributary the Mosel was the busiest river in mediaeval Europe, a major highway for people, goods and ideas, and a source of wealth for both cities and feudal lords. The abundance of Romanesque architecture in the region is matched by its variety, and in museums and cathedral treasuries outstanding examples of the other arts survive.

Itinerary

Day 1: Maria Laach. Depart at c. 10.00am from London St Pancras by Eurostar to Brussels and on to Cologne. Continue to Maria Laach, an active Benedictine monastery with a Romanesque church in an unspoilt lakeside setting. There is time for a preliminary survey of one of the most homogenous and complete of early Romanesque churches and its beautifully sculpted narthex. Overnight Maria Laach.

Day 2: Aachen, Schwarz-Rheindorf. Drive to Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), Charlemagne's favourite capital. The cathedral, a most precious survival of early mediaeval architecture, has a remarkable rotunda based on one in Ravenna (last capital of the Roman Empire) with the emperor's throne in situ and the treasury has outstanding mediaeval metalwork. The small lovely late Romanesque church at Schwarz-Rheindorf is unusual in having two storeys, and has important wall paintings. Overnight Maria Laach.

Day 3: Trier. The Roman city of Trier was for a while capital of the Western Empire and an important early centre of Christianity. Its surviving Roman buildings, still the most impressive group in northern Europe, were a major influence on German Romanesque. Visit the Porta Nigra (city gate), and the Aula Palatina, Emperor Constantine's throne hall. Romanesque churches incorporating Roman masonry include the cathedral and the Basilica of St Matthias. Continue to Speyer, a charming town beside the Rhine. Overnight Speyer.

Day 4: Speyer, Mainz. Speyer, second of the imperial cathedrals, is the mausoleum of the Salian emperors and the largest of Rhenish Romanesque churches. With its parkland setting, vast vaulted nave and well preserved eastern parts, it is immensely impressive. The museum has regalia from the imperial tombs. The busy and picturesque city of Mainz is the site of the third of the imperial cathedrals, elaborate outside (with six towers) and sombre within. Overnight Speyer.

Day 5: Limburg, Lorsch, Worms. The abbey church at Limburg an der Lahn enjoys a striking situation on a hilltop, the effect enhanced by a full complement of seven spires. A precious and beautiful remnant of Carolingian Europe, the gateway of Lorsch Abbey is crudely classicizing. One of the three 'imperial' cathedrals and the least changed, Worms was rebuilt and richly ornamented around 1200. Overnight Cologne.

Day 6: Cologne. One of the largest cities in mediaeval Europe, Cologne has the greatest concentration of Romanesque churches to be found anywhere. Among those visited are St Maria im Kapitol, which introduced clover-leaf apse clusters, Gross St Martin, with its huge crossing tower, St Gereon, with a unique dome and arcaded decoration and St Pantaleon, with a liturgically interesting east end. There is also time for the Gothic cathedral and the Cathedral Treasury. Overnight Cologne.

Day 7: Cologne. The Schnütgen Museum has an excellent collection, superbly displayed, of mediaeval decorative arts. There is some free time: there are fine collections in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum (paintings), Diocesan Museum (mediaeval art) and Romano-Germanic Museum. The train via Brussels arrives at St Pancras c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,180 (deposit £200). This includes:—train travel (first class, standard premier) on Eurostar and ICE or Thalys; travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 5 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; all admission to museums, etc.; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all taxes. **Single room supplement £200. Price without all rail travel £1,930.**

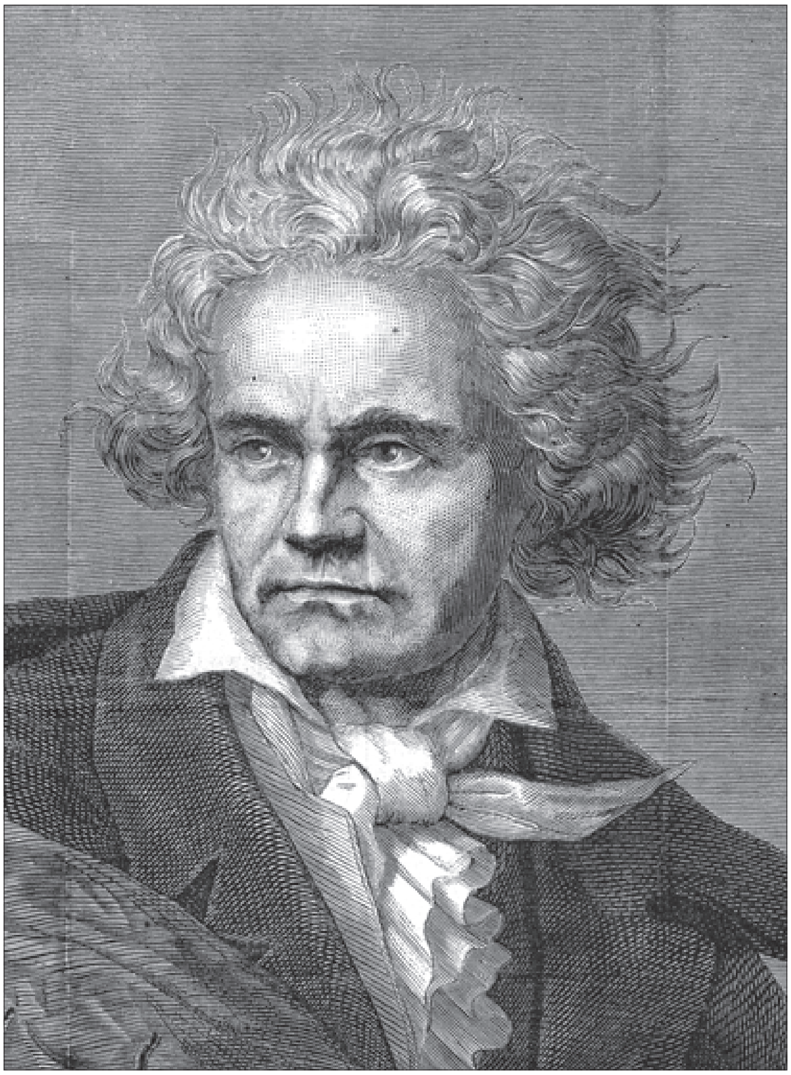
Hotels: in Maria Laach (2 nights): a quiet and comfortable hotel next to the secluded monastery. In Speyer (2 nights): a small traditional hotel in an old building around a courtyard close to the cathedral. In Cologne (2 nights): a large traditional hotel next to the cathedral, very comfortable and well-run.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour; coaches usually have to park at some distance from the monuments visited. Participants have to carry their own luggage at railway stations. There is quite a lot of coach travel; average distance by coach per day: 90 miles.

Small group: the tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

BEETHOVEN IN BONN

ALL THE SYMPHONIES



Beethoven, engraving 1870 from 'Harper's Weekly'.

2–8 October 2012 (MZ 414)
7 days • £2,460 (including 5 concerts)
Lecturer: Professor Barry Cooper

Five concerts with all nine symphonies at the Beethovenhalle with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen.

The itinerary includes some of the many museums of this former capital city and an optional day in Cologne.

First-class rail from London to Cologne.

4-star hotel overlooking the Rhine.

Bonn was the seat of the Prince-Archbishops of Cologne, ex-officio one of the eight Electors of the Holy Roman Empire and temporal ruler of one of the weightier principalities in the German-speaking lands. Its location on the Rhine, Europe's great thoroughfare, and not far from France and the Netherlands helped to ensure that it was no cultural backwater. During Beethoven's youth the electoral court maintained a corps of musicians which ranked with the largest of such establishments – larger than those, for example, in Salzburg or Eszterháza.

Beethoven's father and grandfather had been among their number, and Beethoven himself may well have been content to have settled into lifelong electoral service, his Olympian talents nurtured by the security of a salaried existence. But the French Revolution and subsequent conquest of the Rhineland eliminated that possibility. The study visit he made to Vienna at the age of 22 became a lifelong exile.

Maybe distance made the heart grow fonder, but his letters suggest he had the warmest memories of his home town and enduring affection for his Bonn friends and some (not all) of his family.

Bonn's honourable cultural history contributed to its choice as the temporary (as was expected at the time) seat of government of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1947.

Despite the accumulation of parliamentary paraphernalia, government buildings and embassies it never shed its provincial, small-town feel, hence the notorious epithet, 'a small town in Germany'. Then in the 1990s Berlin became the German capital again. The spectre of empty ministries, boarded-up shops and urban decay loomed, but such was the assiduity of the city fathers and the generosity of central government that employment has actually risen and cultural amenities much enhanced.

Most of the major museums and art galleries reopened in rebuilt or refurbished buildings after the loss of capital status. The annual International Beethoven Festival is a major event, featuring world-class orchestras and artists from around the world.

Itinerary

Day 1: Bonn. Travel by rail from London to Cologne, leaving St Pancras at 10.00am and changing at Brussels. Continue by coach from Cologne to Bonn (30 km), arriving in time for a talk and dinner.

Day 2: Bonn. A morning walk follows a route linking places associated with Beethoven: family homes, school, churches where he played the organ, the Electoral Palace, the tavern he frequented, memorial sculpture and the Beethovenhalle (concert hall). Free afternoon: the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, well documenting the history of the region through works of art and artefacts, is recommended. *Concert: Beethoven, Symphony No.1; Unsuk Chin, Violin Concerto with Viviane Hagner (violin); Beethoven, Symphony No.7.*

Day 3: Bonn. Guided visit of the Haus der Geschichte, an excellent museum of the history of Germany since 1945, followed by some free time with the opportunity to visit the adjacent Kunstmuseum Bonn, a good collection of 20th-century art especially August Macke. *Concert: Beethoven, Symphony No.2; Brett Dean, 'Testament' for orchestra; Beethoven, Symphony No.3.*

Day 4: Brühl. Drive to Brühl to visit Schloss Augustusburg, residence of the Prince-Archbishops of Cologne and one of the most magnificent 18th-century palaces and gardens in Germany. Free afternoon. *Concert: Beethoven, Symphony No.6; Joseph Phibbs, new work; Beethoven, Symphony No.4.*

Day 5: Maria Laach. A relaxing day begins with cruising upstream along the Rhine past wooded hills, vineyards and small towns. Disembark at Remagen and drive into the hills to the west to visit Maria Laach, an abbey with one of the most complete and satisfying of Romanesque churches. Lunch here and time to walk around the lake. *Cncert: Beethoven, Symphony No.8; Steven Stucky, new work; Beethoven, Symphony No.5.*

Day 6: Cologne. Optional rail excursion to Cologne with five hours for independent exploration (maps and notes supplied). Cologne was the largest city in Roman Gaul and the largest city in northern Europe in the Middle Ages. Outstanding architecture includes several Romanesque churches and the Gothic cathedral, vast, prolix and supremely beautiful. Museums include the Römisch-Germanisches Museum (Roman and early mediaeval collection) the cathedral treasury (reliquary of the Three Magi) and the Wallraf-Richartz Museum (Old Master paintings) and the Schnütgen, a superb display of mediaeval art. *Concert: Mamadou Diabaté, new work for percussion ensemble with Martin Grubinger & Friends; Beethoven, Symphony No.9.*

Day 7: Bonn. Visit the graves of Beethoven's mother and Robert Schumann then arrive in Cologne in time for another short visit, including the cathedral, before boarding the 3.15pm train for Brussels. The Eurostar arrives at London St Pancras at 8.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,460 (deposit £250). This includes: 5 concert tickets costing c. £410; return rail travel (superior class Eurostar; first class into Germany and back); accommodation as described below; all breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 light supper and 3 dinners with wine, water and coffee; private coach travel within Germany; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £170. Price excluding all rail travel £2,310.**

Music tickets: to be confirmed autumn 2011.

Hotel: overlooking the Rhine, this is the best hotel in Bonn. Built in 1956, public areas retain stylish features of that era, bedrooms are modern. There is a good restaurant, terraced gardens. Ten minutes on foot to the city centre and twenty minutes to the Beethovenhalle.

How strenuous? A fair amount of walking is unavoidable, and the tour is planned on the expectation that participants walk to concerts. Participants need to be able to lift their own luggage onto coaches and trains. The rail journey from London to Cologne and back necessitates a change in Brussels. Average distance by coach per day: c. 25 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL IN THE COMPOSER'S BIRTHPLACE

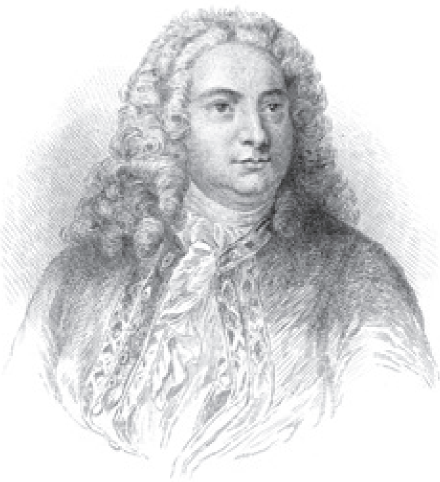
HANDEL IN HALLE

30 May–5 June 2012 (MY 250)
7 days • £2,330
(including tickets to 6 performances)
Lecturer: David Vickers

Contact us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

Six performances, including two operas: *Alcina* and *Poro*, *Re dell'Indie* (concert version), and two oratorios: *La Resurrezione* and *Messiah*.

As with all our music tours, there will be excursions to places of beauty or architectural interest in the vicinity, while allowing plenty of free time in Halle itself. The city survived the war without much damage, and the effects of pollution and neglect during the years of communism have been largely reversed.



G.F. Handel, engraving after A. Clément 1844.

Practicalities

Price: £2,330 (deposit £250). This includes: tickets for 6 performances costing c. £260; air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus A319); private coach for airport transfers and excursions; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guides. **Single supplement £120**. **Price without flights £2,170.**

Hotel: a comfortable hotel in the town centre.

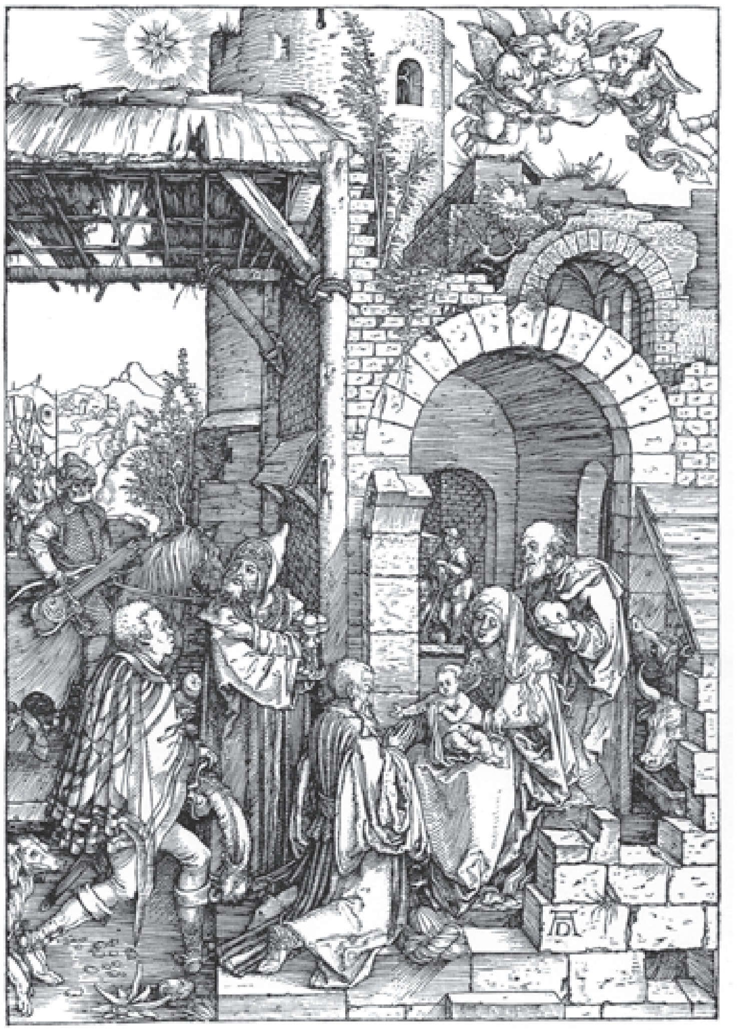
Music tickets: to be confirmed January 2012.

How strenuous? Some walking to reach concert venues; average distance by coach per day: 67 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

DÜRER & RIEMENSCHNEIDER

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES, THE BEGINNING OF THE MODERN



Adoration of the Magi, after an etching c. 1504 by Albrecht Dürer.

7–13 July 2012 (MY 300)
7 days • £1,960
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

A study of Tilman Riemenschneider, one of the finest of late mediaeval sculptors.

Finishes with the most important exhibition for forty years of works by Albrecht Dürer.

Located in Franconia (north Bavaria), one of Germany's loveliest and artistically richest regions, many of the sculptures remain in the chapels for which they were commissioned.

Stays in Würzburg and Nuremberg, respective homes of the two artists and among the loveliest historic cities in Germany.

Turmoil – social, political and spiritual – overshadowed southern Germany on the cusp between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As elsewhere and at other times, the response of some artists to such conditions was an apparent denial of troublesome actuality beyond their workshop walls, and the creation of artworks of serene melancholy and stylised beauty.

The limewood and sandstone sculptures of Tilman Riemenschneider (c. 1460–1531) exemplify this tendency. Beauty of design and virtuosity of chisel never waver. But his genius propelled his art far beyond the realm of elegant escapism and suffused it with a profound spirituality which reaches out and touches us today. It helps that his best work remains in the places for which he made them, many of these being little country churches located deep in the lovely countryside of his native Franconia.

Riemenschneider qualifies as one of the greatest of great artists who remain largely unknown by the art-loving public – at least in English-speaking countries: in Germany he has long been a hero. That he enjoyed considerable success in his lifetime as both artisan and citizen is demonstrated by his large workshop and appointment as mayor of Würzburg. But his ambivalent response to the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 led to his imprisonment by the Prince Bishop, an insight, rare for the mediaeval period, into the conflicts not only of the times but in the artist's own mind.

By contrast, with Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) we do not have to rely on inference because we can read his copious correspondence and theoretical treatises. Also Franconian, and only slightly younger, he was nevertheless a very different artist from Riemenschneider. Painter, draughtsman, designer and printmaker, he travelled widely, north and west to the Netherlands and the Rhineland and south to Italy, principally Venice. Here he was immersed in the ideals and practices of the Italian Renaissance, and his radically innovatory creations and staggering dexterous skills transformed the art of his homeland. Many regard him as Germany's greatest artist; indisputably, he ushered in a new era for German art.

Itinerary

Day 1: Creglingen. Fly from London Heathrow to Frankfurt at c. 9.00am. Drive through gently undulating countryside to the little pilgrimage church at Creglingen. Here is an astonishing assembly of four fine carved altarpieces, Riemenschneider's (TR's) *Altarpiece of the Virgin* (1505/8) among them. Continue to Würzburg, which with its vine-clad riverbanks, enchanting streetscape, Baroque palaces and mediaeval churches, is a delight. Four nights are spent here.

Day 2: Würzburg. The day is spent in Würzburg. Begin by crossing the River Main on the 14th-century bridge and ascend to the excellent museum in the Marienberg, a fortified episcopal residence. Here are many sculptures by TR, including *Adam and Eve*. An afternoon exploration of the historic architecture of the city is regularly punctuated by further sculpture by TR, in the Neumünster and in the exquisite Marienkapelle. Overnight Würzburg.

Day 3: Detwang, Rothenburg, Heidingsfeld. Looping to the south, see the *Crucifixion Retable* (1505/8) at Detwang. Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber is an exceedingly picturesque little town scarcely changed in appearance for hundreds of years. In the church of St James there is the vast *Altarpiece of Holy Blood* (1501/5), TR's early masterpiece. After some free time, drive to Heidingsfeld in the outskirts of Würzburg to see TR's *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (1505/10). Overnight Würzburg.

Day 4: Würzburg, Volkach, Maidbronn. The morning has some free time and a visit to the Archepiscopal Palace, one of the most magnificent 18th-century buildings in Europe. The ceiling frescoes are Tiepolo's masterpieces. The excursion to villages north of Würzburg includes two of TR's finest and most affecting works, *The Rosary Madonna* at Volkach and the sandstone *Lamentation* (1525) at Maidbronn, one of his last and most moving works. Overnight Würzburg.

Day 5: Bamberg. Bamberg is one of the most enchanting towns in northern Europe, with a hilltop and riverside townscape of exceptional charm. The splendid Romanesque cathedral has some of Germany's finest mediaeval sculpture including the *Bamberg Rider* (c. 1230), a potent image of knightly values, and, by TR, the *Tomb of Emperor Henry II.* There is time for the Diocesan Museum and for a special exhibition, '1000 Years of Bamberg'. Spend the first of two nights in Nuremberg.

Day 6: Nuremberg. An immensely rich trading and manufacturing city in the Middle Ages, Nuremberg is girt by massive walls and possesses much art and architecture of the 15th and 16th centuries. The morning walk includes the church of St Sebaldus, which contains outstanding sculpture by Veit Stoss and others, and the Albrecht Dürer House. In the later afternoon there is a visit to the major exhibition at the German National Museum devoted to Dürer's early career. Overnight Nuremberg.

Day 7: Nuremberg. St Lawrence is the city's other great church, and is likewise laden with major artworks including Veit Stoss's *Annunciation* (1517/18). Return to the National Museum for a second visit to the Dürer exhibition, to see some later works by Dürer (special arrangement) and for a tour of the permanent collection, the finest for German mediaeval and Renaissance art. Fly from Munich to Heathrow, arriving c. 7.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,960 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on flights with Lufthansa (aircraft: Boeing); travel by private coach; breakfasts and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, etc.; all tips for drivers, restaurant staff and local guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of a lecturer. **Single supplement £80. Price without flights £1,800.**

Hotels: in Würzburg: a well-located, comfortable and characterful 4-star hotel, well run with a good restaurant. In Nuremburg: a charming, 3-star-superior hotel in a historic building and located near to the German National Museum.

How strenuous? There is a fair bit of walking on this tour, some over uneven ground. Average distance by coach per day: 66 miles (106 km)

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

BAROQUE & ROCOCO

IN SOUTHERN GERMANY

'Rocaille' cartouche, engraving c. 1750

13–21 June 2012 (MY 281)
9 days • £2,390
Lecturer: Tom Abbott

16–24 August 2012 (MY 335)
9 days • £2,390
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

Some of the most uplifting and spectacular buildings in the world.

Glorious countryside and unspoilt towns and villages.

Baroque and Rococo reached a triumphant fulfilment in the churches and palaces of southern Germany, and the styles are manifested in the region in some of the most uplifting and spectacular buildings in the world. It is astonishing that these marvels are not better known, but the artistic heritage of Germany continues to be sadly undervalued. Moreover, many of the choicest items on this tour are not easily accessible, being situated deep in the countryside.

Around the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was something of an economic miracle in the German lands, accompanied by a frenetic upsurge in building activity. This followed nearly a whole century which was blighted by wars and economic collapse. At the end of it the Catholic Church emerged revitalised, wealthier than ever and triumphant in its defeat of Protestantism. In the temporal sphere, the creed of absolutism, which imposed few constraints on the power of the prince or local lord, was at its height.

The Baroque style was the perfect expression both for the Church Triumphant and for the temporal ruler who, taking his cue from Louis XIV at Versailles, wished to overawe his subjects and impress on all visitors the might and magnificence of his person.

The Rococo, which arrived in Germany in the 1730s, was delicate and light-hearted by comparison with the imposing magnificence of High Baroque, but produced some of the most exquisite interiors in the history of art.

Itinerary

Day 1: Zwiefalten, Steinhausen. Fly at c. 8.15am from London Heathrow to Stuttgart. Visit two pilgrimage churches: the double-towered church of Zwiefalten by J.M. Fischer and the oval church at Steinhausen, built and decorated by the Zimmermann brothers. First of two nights in Weingarten.

Day 2: Weingarten, Bad Schussenried, Birnau. Begin with a visit to the magnificent Baroque basilica of Weingarten Abbey, 'the St Peter's of Germany', then on to the glorious library hall at Bad Schussenried convent with abundant imagery. Finally, to Birnau, among vineyards above Lake Constance and one of the most delectable of Rococo churches. Overnight Weingarten.

Day 3: Ottobeuren, Wies. A pinnacle of Baroque and Rococo emotional power is achieved at J.M. Fischer's church and abbey at Ottobeuren. The pilgrimage church of Wies in the foothills of the Alps, created by the Zimmermann brothers, is of astounding beauty. First of three nights in Munich.

Day 4: Munich. Visit the Italian-built Theatinerkirche, one of the first Baroque churches north of the Alps. The little church of St John Nepomuk, created by the Asam brothers for their own use and the Residenz, palace of the Electors of Bavaria, with sumptuous Rococo interiors and theatre by the architect Cuvilliés with the recently restored theatre. Free afternoon. Overnight Munich.

Day 5: Nymphenburg, Diessen. On the outskirts of Munich, the palace, pavilions and gardens of Nymphenburg, summer residence of the Electors of Bavaria; the Amalienburg pavilion is the apogee of secular Rococo interiors. At Diessen, visit the abbey and Rococo church of St Mary designed by Fischer with frescoes by Bergmüller and an altarpiece by Tiepolo. Overnight Munich.

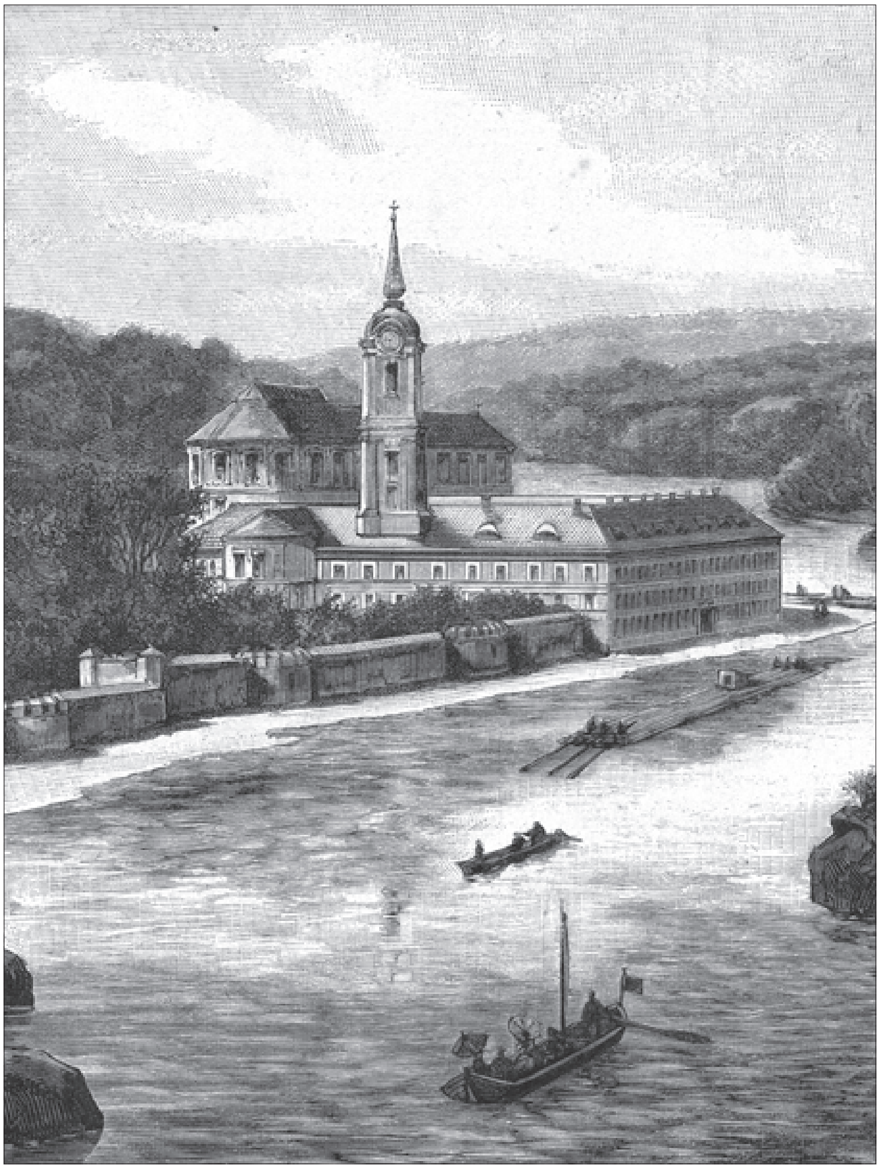
Day 6: Weltenburg, Rohr, Pommersfelden. Two abbey churches by the Asam brothers: Rohr, with the altar of *The Assumption*, highpoint of Baroque sculpture, and Weltenburg, with controlled lighting and rich decoration suggestive of transcendental theatricality. Take a short cruise along the Danube. Visit Schloss Pommersfelden, a splendid country house with one of the grandest of Baroque staircases. First of two nights in Bamberg.

Day 7: Bamberg. One of the loveliest and least spoilt of German towns, Bamberg has fine streetscape, riverside walks and picturesque upper town around the Romanesque cathedral. The Diocesan Museum has outstanding mediaeval textiles, the Baroque former town hall built on a bridge houses a porcelain collection. Free afternoon. Overnight Bamberg.

Day 8: Bayreuth, Vierzehnheiligen. An enchanting version of Rococo decoration developed in Bayreuth in the town palace and at the Hermitage, a complex of gardens, palaces and pavilions and the wonderful Baroque opera house (by Giuseppe Bibbiena). Visit the pilgrimage church of Vierzehnheiligen (Balthasar Neumann), perhaps the greatest of Rococo churches. Overnight Bamberg.

Day 9: Würzburg. Visit the Residenz in Würzburg, the Archbishop's palace, the finest Baroque palace in Germany, designed by Balthasar Neumann with frescoes by G.B. Tiepolo. Fly from Frankfurt, arriving Heathrow c. 6.00pm.

Weltenburg Abbey, wood engraving c. 1890.



Practicalities

Price: £2,390 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); travel by private coach, and by metro in Munich; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 light lunch and 6 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all taxes; all tips for drivers, waiters, guides; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £220**. **Price without flights £2,250.**

Hotels: in Weingarten (2 nights): a quiet 4-star hotel with a good restaurant. In Munich (3 nights): a well-located 4-star, traditional style decor. In Bamberg (3 nights): a 4-star hotel, elegant and quiet.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking on this tour. It would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. Average distance by coach per day: 86 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

CLASSICAL GREECE

THE PELOPONNESE, ATTICA & ATHENS

1–10 October 2011 (MY 985)
This tour is currently full.

21–30 April 2012 (MY 221)
10 days • £3,320
Lecturer: Em. Professor Trevor Bryce

8–17 September 2012 (MZ 368)
10 days • £3,360
Lecturer: Dr Andrew Farrington

29 September–8 October 2012 (MZ 385)
10 days • £3,360
Lecturer: Henry Hurst

A comprehensive survey of the principal Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic sites in mainland Greece.

Highlights include Mycenae, Olympia, Delphi.

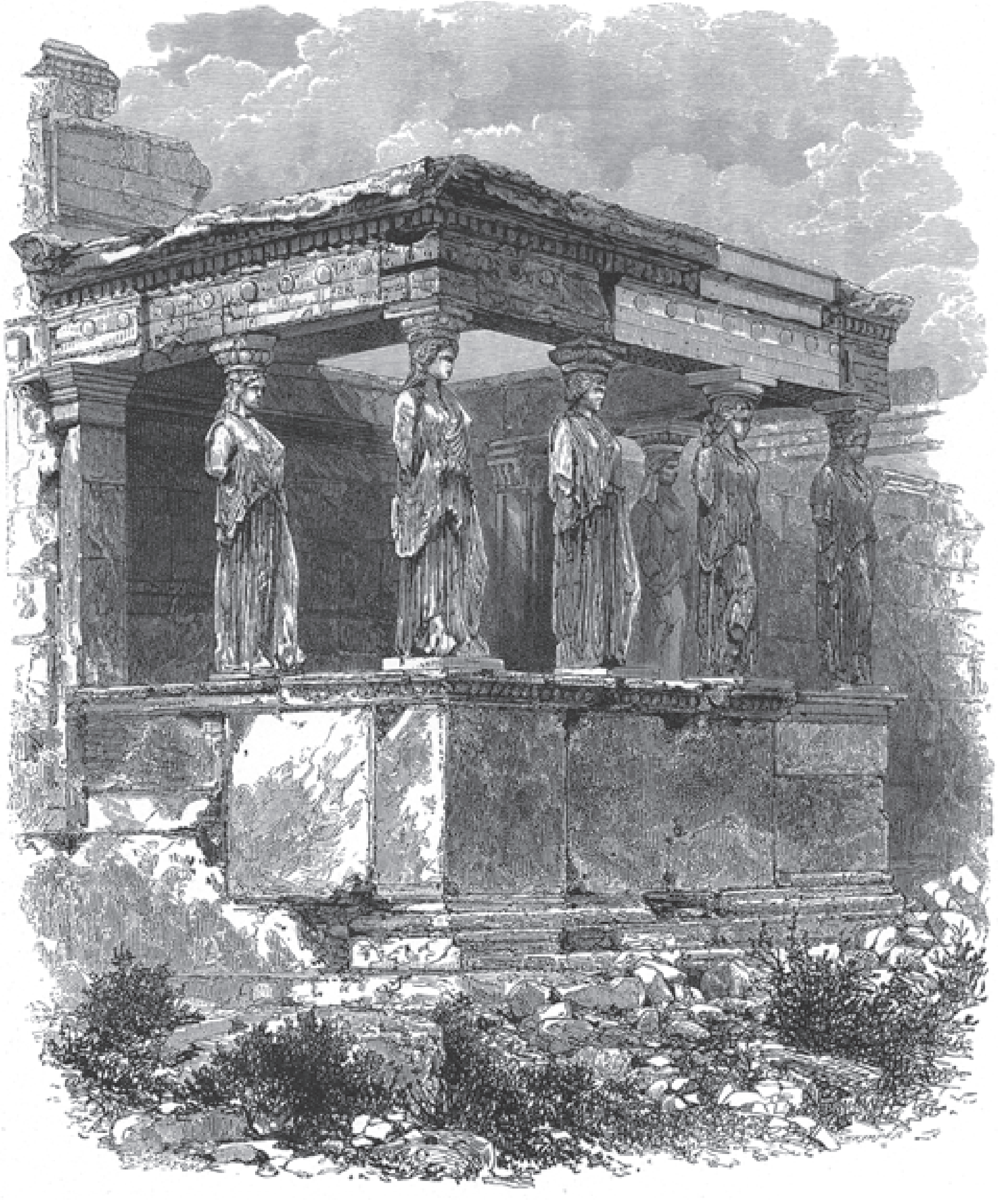
Ends in Athens, with a full day spent on the Acropolis and in the ancient Agora (market-place) and theatre of Dionysus.

A long and full tour, covering a lot of ground, but with plenty of time to absorb the sites.

The Ancient Greeks had far greater influence on western civilization than any other people or nation. For two and a half millennia, philosophy and ethics, the fundamentals of science and mathematics, prevailing notions of government and citizenship, literature and the visual arts have derived their seeds, and a large amount of their substance, from the Greeks. In the words of H.D.F. Kitto 'there gradually emerged a people not very numerous, not very powerful, not very well organized, who had a totally new conception of what human life was for, and showed for the first time what the human mind was for.'

Whatever the depth of our Classical education, there is a deep-seated knowledge in all of us that the places visited on this tour are of the greatest significance for our identity and way of life. A journey to Greece is like a journey to our homeland, a voyage in which a search for our roots is fulfilled.

In no field is the Greek contribution to the modern world more immediately evident than in architecture. The grip upon the imagination that the Greek temple has exerted is astonishing, and in one way or another – ranging from straightforward imitation of the whole to decorative use of distorted details – has dominated nearly all monumental or aspirational building ever since. A striking and salutary conclusion, however, which inevitably emerges from participation on this tour, is that the originals are unquestionably superior. This is also true of sculpture.


Athens, the Erechtheion, wood engraving c. 1890.

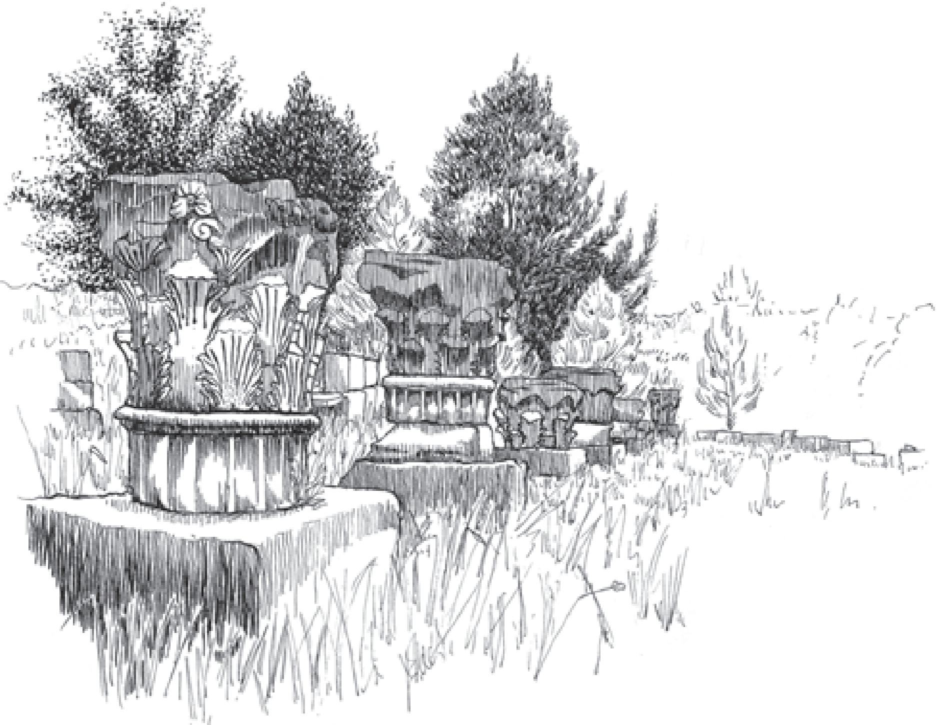
This tour includes nearly all of the most important archaeological sites, architectural remains and museums of antiquities on mainland Greece. It presents a complete picture of ancient Greek civilization beginning with the Mycenaeans, the Greek Bronze Age, and continuing through Archaic, Classical and, to a lesser extent, Hellenistic and Roman Greece. It also provides a glimpse of the spiritual splendour of Byzantine art and architecture.

It is a full itinerary, but the pace is manageable. Plenty of time is available on the sites and in the museums, allowing opportunity both for adequate exposition by the lecturer and time for further exploration on your own.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.55am from London Heathrow to Athens. The little port of Nauplion is one of the most attractive towns in mainland Greece. Arrive here in time for dinner. First of three nights in Nauplion.

Day 2: Nauplion, Tiryns, Mycenae. Today's theme is the Mycenaean civilization of the Argolid Plain, the Greece of Homer's heroes (16th–13th centuries BC). Visit Tiryns a citadel with massive Cyclopean walls of enormous blocks of masonry and Mycenae, reputedly Agamemnon's capital, with Treasury of Atreus (finest of beehive tombs) and Acropolis (Lion



Olympia, 20th-century pen drawing of fragments in the ancient sanctuary.

Gate). There are spectacular views from the 18th-century Venetian Fortress of Palamidi.

Day 3: Corinth, Epidauros. The site of Ancient Corinth has the earliest standing Doric temple on mainland Greece, and a fine museum with evidence of Greece's first large-scale pottery industry. Epidauros, centre for the worship of Asclepios, god of medicine, where popular magical dream cures were dispensed, remains here and includes the best-preserved of all Greek theatres.

Day 4: Arcadia, Bassae. Drive across the middle of the Peloponnese, through the beautiful plateau of Arcadia and past impressive mountain scenery. A stunning road leads to the innovatory and well-preserved 5th-century Temple of Apollo (in a tent for protection) on the mountain top at Bassae (3,700 feet) and through further breathtaking scenery to Olympia. Overnight Olympia.

Day 5: Olympia. Nestling in a verdant valley, Olympia is one of the most evocative of ancient sites; never a town, but the principal sanctuary of Zeus and site of the quadrennial pan-Hellenic athletics competitions. Many fascinating structures remain, including the temples of Hera and Zeus, the workshop of Phidias and the stadium. The museum contains fragments of pediment sculpture, among the most important survivals of Classical Greek art. First two nights in Delphi.

Day 6: Delphi. Clinging to the lower slopes of Mount Parnassos, Delphi is the most spectacularly evocative of ancient Greek sites. Of incalculable religious and political importance, the Delphic oracle attracted pilgrims from all over the Hellenic world. The Sanctuary of Pythian Apollo, has a theatre and Athenian Treasury and the Sanctuary of Athena, has a circular temple. The museum is especially rich in Archaic sculpture. Some free time amidst the austere beauty of the valley.

Day 7: Hosios Loukas, Athens. Visit the Byzantine monastery of Hosios Loukas in a beautiful setting in a remote valley, one of the finest buildings of mediaeval Greece with remarkable mosaics. Walk in the Plaka district of Athens. First of three nights in Athens.

Day 8: Athens. The Acropolis is the foremost site of Classical Greece. The Parthenon (built 447–438 BC) is indubitably the supreme achievement of Greek architecture. Other architectural masterpieces are the Propylaia (monumental gateway), Temple of Athena Nike and the Erechtheion. At the Theatre of Dionysos, plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides were first performed. The new Acropolis museum has superb Archaic and Classical sculpture, including some by Phidias and his assistants. The Agora (market place) was the centre of civic life in ancient Athens, with the small Doric Hephaisteion, the best-preserved of Greek temples.

Day 9: Athens. Kerameikos Cemetery was where Athenians were buried beyond the ancient city walls. The refurbished National Archaeological Museum has the finest collection of Greek art and artefacts to be found anywhere. The vast Corinthian Temple of Olympian Zeus was completed by Hadrian 700 years after its inception. Some free time.

Day 10: Athens. Drive to the 5th-century Temple of Poseidon at Sounion, overlooking the sea at the southernmost tip of the Attic peninsula, visited by Byron in 1810. Fly from Athens, arriving Heathrow c. 4.40pm.

Practicalities

Prices: £3,320 (April), **£3,360** (Sept.) (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Boeing 767 & Airbus A320); private coach travel (day 8 is on foot); accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches (1 is a picnic) and 7 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and a local guide. **Single supplement £370** (April), **£400** (Sept.) **Price without flights £3,070** (April), **£3,110** (Sept.).

Hotels: in Nauplion (3 nights): a small comfortable hotel in a converted 19th-century mansion situated near the harbour. In Olympia (1 night): a characterful hotel outside the town. In Delphi (2 nights): a modern hotel a short coach ride from the archaeological site. In Athens (3 nights): smart hotel near the picturesque Plaka quarter.

How strenuous? This is a long tour with three hotel changes and some long journeys. You will be on your feet for long stretches of time in some cases on exposed sites and walking over rough terrain. Sure-footedness and agility are essential. Average distance by coach per day: 70 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

WALKING ON SAMOS & CHIOS

LANDSCAPE & HERITAGE ON CONTRASTING AEGEAN ISLANDS

30 April–8 May 2012 (MY 227)
Lecturer: Nigel McGilchrist

24 September–2 October 2012 (MZ 386)
Lecturer: Nigel McGilchrist

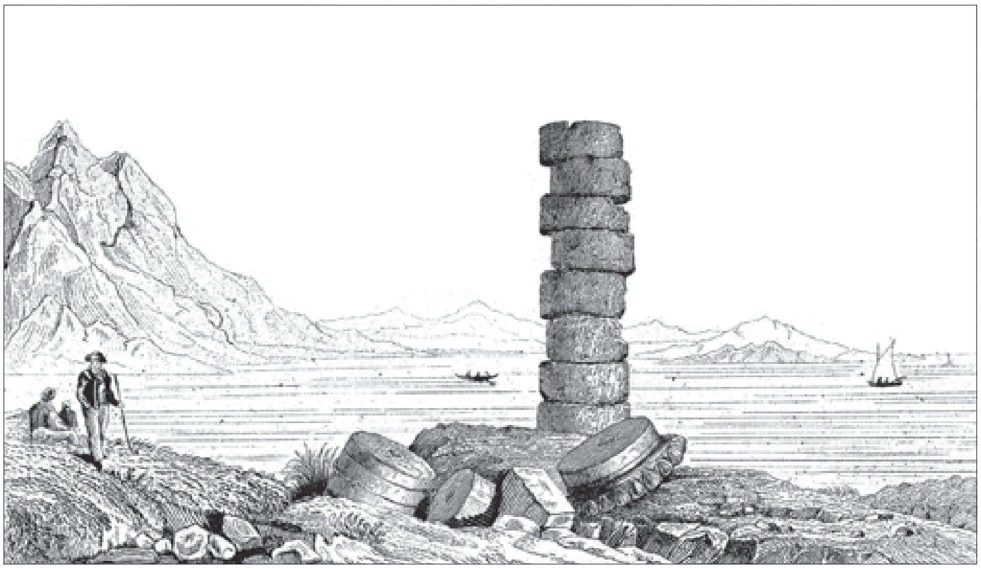
Contact us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

A new tour for 2012.

Two varied islands; one renowned for ancient sites, the other for Byzantine and Ottoman architecture.

Six country walks of between three and six miles, chosen to give unparalleled access to remoter parts of the islands.

Led by an historian and walker who has written comprehensively on the Greek islands



Samos, engraving c. 1840.

For a spell in the sixth century BC the island of Samos was a major force in Aegean power politics, helped by its abundance of fresh water and the ruthless but energetic leadership of its tyrant Polycrates. The island was also at the forefront of mathematics, engineering, poetry and sculpture, losing its supremacy when the Persians conquered Ionian Greece (the mainland, now Turkey, is only a few miles away). The mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras was born here.

Samos has important ancient sites, described by Herodotus when he visited in the fifth century BC as 'three of the greatest building and engineering marvels in the Greek world': the Temple of Hera, the artificial harbour and its protective mole at Pythagorion, and the Tunnel of Eupalinos, nearly a kilometre long.

The island is also blessed with natural beauty. The patchwork of olive groves and citrus orchards on the fertile plains of the Kámbos Chóras to the south give way to forests of cypress and pine in the hills. An abundance of springs mean the island stays lush and green despite the dry climate, and a huge variety of Mediterranean wild flowers flourish; over 60 species of wild orchid have been documented here. Remote mountain villages offer the perfect start- and end- points for very varied walks, tracing mule tracks and stream beds; and exhilarating coastal paths offer wide open vistas of turquoise waters crashing against the cliffs below.

Chios lies fifty-five miles nautical miles from Samos. The surviving architecture offers a different perspective on the history of the eastern Aegean islands, with Byzantine and Ottoman predominating. The most impressive building is the 11th-century Nea Moni monastery. One of the richest in Greece, it attracted first-rate artists, and the mosaics are some of the most significant in Greece.

The island's fame and fortune were due to a unique type of mastic tree which produces a resin prized throughout history for its medicinal properties. The mastic villages were largely spared the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks in 1822 in the Greek War of Independence because of the value of 'Chios tears'. Mastic is experiencing a resurgence today and is cultivated for cosmetics, confectionery and food.

The fertile plains also provided Chios with a thriving citrus fruit industry. The Genoese imported the trees during their occupation of the island in the 14th and 15th centuries, and trade flourished due to the sweetness of Chios's oranges and mandarins. Chios town was subsequently one of the most elegant in the Aegean until the great 1881 earthquake, which destroyed many fine Genoese *palazzi*. Unfortunately, this bustling harbour town's modern architecture is less aesthetically pleasing.

A note on the walks:

To a large degree, walking paths and trails on these islands are maintained by voluntary groups of local walkers who pride themselves on the landscapes available to them, but they receive little or no state support. They are often rough underfoot – rubble and stones require well-heeled walking boots and a good sense of balance. We have chosen paths that avoid the toughest terrain.

The paths are also chosen for diversity of flora and fauna, views and for their cultural or historical importance. But these paths are sometimes unkempt, rugged and prone to damage by weather and storms. They are also largely single track paths, resulting in Indian file walking for much of the time; the exceptions being on the broad, Ottoman paths that we have also included. Although the distances on these walks are relatively short, walking on this sort of terrain can be more tiring than walking along flatter, gentler paths.

WALKING

Walking the Danube 12
The Schubertiade 18
Walking in Tuscany 106
Walking in Sicily 125
Gastronomy & Walking in Lebanon ... 128
Walking to Santiago 143
Hill Walking in Extremadura 151
British Actions in the Straits 158
Walking in the Canary Islands 159
Lucerne Summer with walking 162
Walking Hadrian's Wall 169
The Cotswolds 174
Walking in Cornwall 176
Walking the Thames Valley 178

BUDAPEST AT CHRISTMAS

ART, ARCHITECTURE & MUSIC

20–27 December 2011 (MY 133)
8 days • £2,460
Lecturer: Dr József Sisa

Two operas at the Hungarian State Opera: *Don Giovanni* (Mozart) and *La Bohème* (Puccini).

Led by a native art historian with excellent English; walks and visits with a local guide.

Includes a visit to the Danube bend.

Opportunity to see a further two operas.

In the heart of Buda a rock outcrop rises abruptly beside the Danube. This was an impregnable citadel around which the city on the right bank developed. Adorning the site is the Royal Palace, now housing a number of museums, the Gothic Matthias Church, the key Hungarian national shrine, and an enclave of picturesque little streets.

Across the river lies Pest, extending with Parisian elegance over less encumbered terrain, a rival and independent city until 1872 when it was formally united with Buda. Now Budapest is the principal metropolis of East-Central Europe, its vitality and splendour emerging again after the post-war period of Soviet domination.

The fortunes of Hungary have been very mixed since the establishment of the country in the tenth century by the Magyars. At the end of the Middle Ages Hungary was one of the most powerful and prosperous kingdoms in Europe, and the most precocious in importing the new Renaissance style of art and architecture. But these achievements were wrecked by a devastating two-hundred-year occupation by the Turks; little survives from before this period.

Much of what was built and created during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries stems from the desire to rival Vienna or to express Hungarian cultural difference and yearnings for independence.

Emulation of western models on the one hand, and cultivation of distinctiveness and originality on the other, are in large part responsible for the allure of Budapest.

We have arranged a programme of walks and visits to familiarise participants with the city and its treasures, major and minor and there will be some time left free to explore independently.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.40pm from London Heathrow to Budapest and some time in the hotel in Pest before dinner.

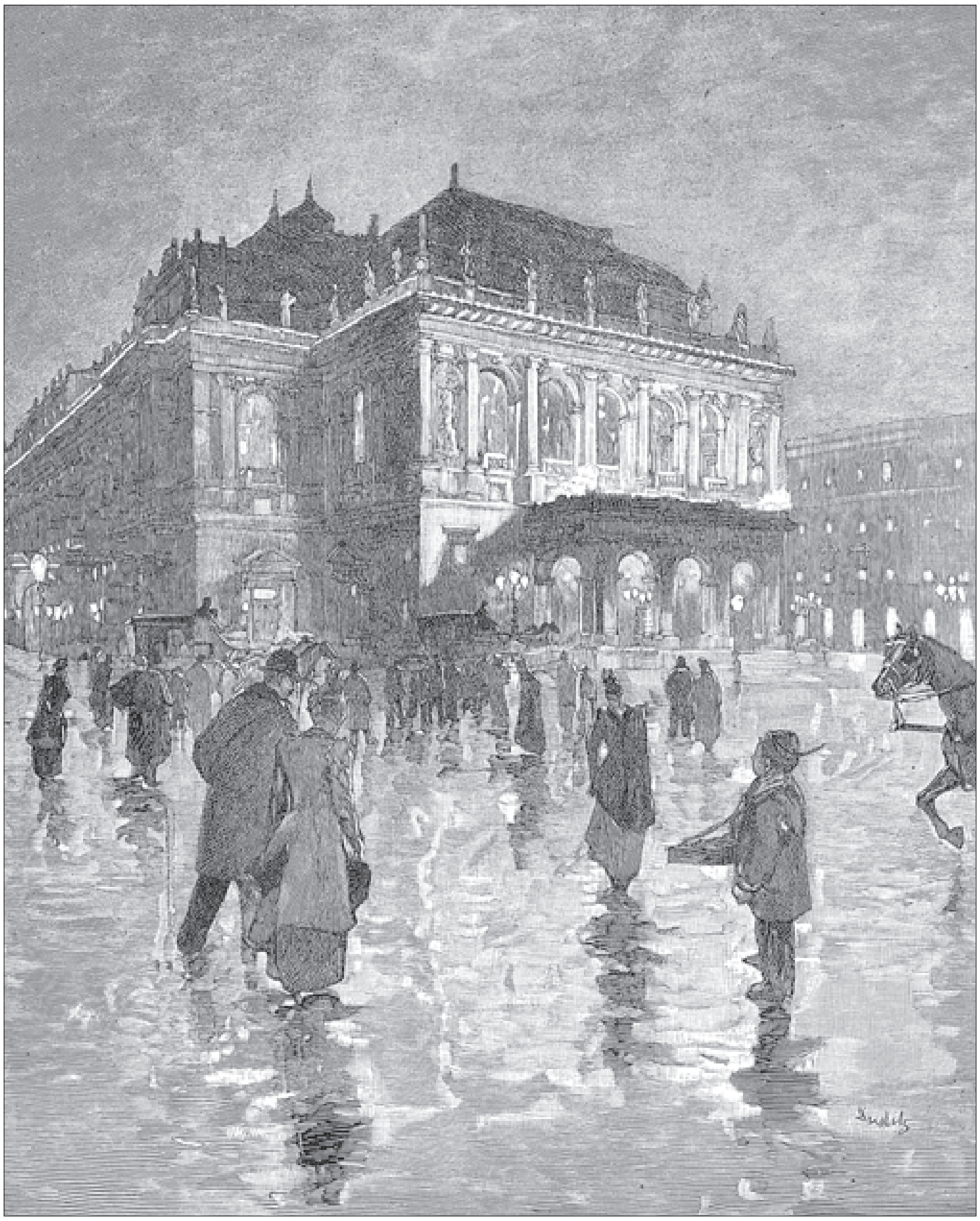
Day 2. Walk to Vörösmarty Square, heart of the inner city of Pest, thence by underground railway (the first on the continent) to Heroes Square and the Millennary Monument (celebrating the founding of the Hungarian state AD 896). The Museum of Fine Arts has an excellent collection of antiquities and European painting, particularly rich in Spanish and Italian works. *Evening opera at the Hungarian State Opera House: **Don Giovanni** (Mozart).*

Day 3. Travel by coach along the course of the Danube to Esztergom. Visit Hungary's first cathedral, its marble chapel and the Christian Museum, one of the finest in the country. *Evening opera at the Hungarian State Opera House: **La Bohème** (Puccini).*

Day 4. Travel by coach to Szentendre, a delightful country town favoured as an artists' retreat for over a century, with several small galleries and studios.

Day 5. Cross the Danube to the hill-top Castle District of Buda. Within the 18th- & 19th-century Royal Palace are the remains of its mediaeval and Renaissance predecessors. The National Gallery housed here has a marvellous collection of Hungarian art from the Middle Ages to the present day. Free afternoon followed by dinner and optional midnight mass at St Stephen's Basilica.

Day 6, Christmas day. The morning is free, though there is the option of attending a church service. Lunch is followed by a guided tour of the State Opera House. Afternoon walk



Budapest Opera House, wood engraving c. 1895.

around the old heart of Pest taking in the Inner City Parish Church and the vast 19th-century Basilica of St Stephen.

Day 7. Morning lecture followed by a tour of Budapest to see architecture and decoration from the turn of the 19th century and from the Bauhaus period. Free afternoon.

Day 8. Fly to Heathrow, arriving c. 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,460 (deposit £250). This includes: tickets to 2 operas costing c. £120; air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 319); coach travel for transfers and excursions and by Metro; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and local guide. **Single supplement £280. Price without flights £2,230.**

Hotel: in Pest, excellently situated beside the Danube and close to the Chain Bridge. A modern international 5-star hotel. Included meals are at the hotel and selected restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on the excursions, some on uneven or cobbled ground. Average distance by coach per day: 16 miles.

Weather: cold, quite possibly freezing.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

The Danube Music Festival

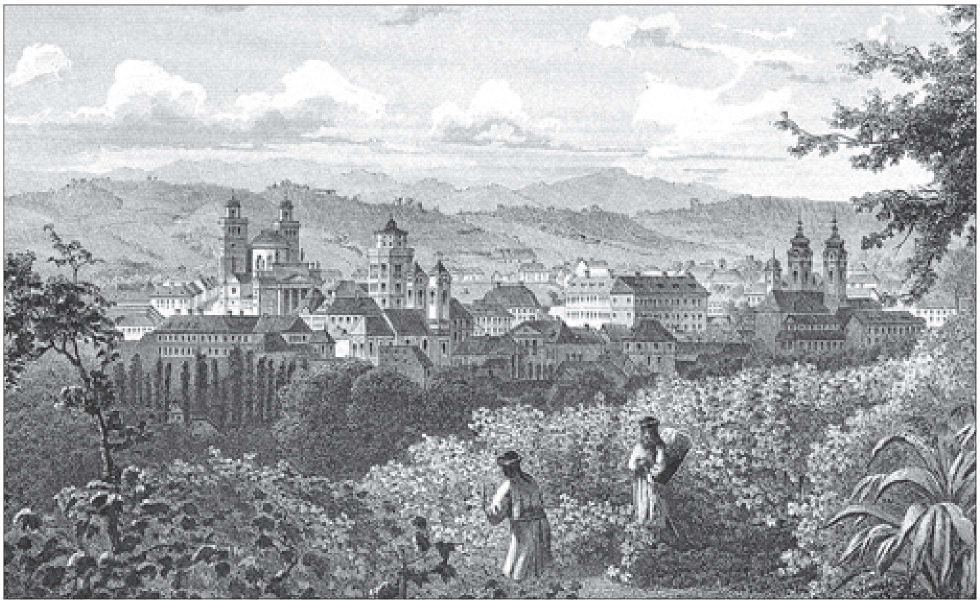
See page 12.

The Budapest Spring Festival

Details available in autumn 2011.
Contact us to register your interest.

Hungary

Transdanubia & the Great Plain



Eger, steel engraving c. 1840.

7–14 September 2011 (MY 950)
8 days • £2,140
Lecturer: Dr József Sisa

Historic towns in a part of the country little visited by tourists.

Fine mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque architecture and art.

Led by an art historian who is also a native Hungarian.

While the magnificence of Budapest and the superb holdings of its museums now attract large numbers of visitors, the cultural riches of the rest of Hungary are still unjustly neglected.

Hungary was formed in the tenth century by horsemen from the Central Asian steppes. Emerging as a powerful and prosperous state at the end of the Middle Ages, it was the first country outside Italy to receive Renaissance architecture and to apply it with understanding. The subsequent Turkish conquest resulted in the elimination of nearly all political and cultural achievements, though impressive Romanesque and Gothic monuments remain, as well as tantalising fragments of great fifteenth-century Italianate palaces.

From the eighteenth century there was steady reconstruction as part of the Austrian empire, resulting in some magnificent Baroque and Classical buildings and large-scale decorative painting. In the nineteenth century the accelerating drive towards independence was accompanied by outstanding artistic and architectural creativity. This tour includes historic towns, churches, abbeys and country houses in the west and the north of the country.

Itinerary

Day 1: Sopron. Fly at c. 10.00am from London Heathrow to Vienna. Drive through the Austrian province of Burgenland, which was part of Hungary until 1919, and across the border to Sopron, one of the best preserved and most picturesque towns in Hungary. Around a Fire Tower of mediaeval foundation and Baroque termination, crowd dozens of ancient patrician houses, churches and synagogues. First of three nights in Győr.

Day 2: Pápa, Sárvár, Sümeg. The spires and domes of Pápa can be seen from many miles away. Once an important ecclesiastical and administrative centre, it has a splendid late-Baroque church and a magnificent Esterházy palace. Episcopal patronage in the little town of Sümeg provided a beautiful 18th-century parish church with frescoes which are the masterpiece of Franz Anton Maulbertsch, the greatest of Austro-Hungarian Rococo painters. Sárvár has a pentagonal Renaissance fortress, with fine rooms of the 16th to 18th centuries.

Day 3: Eszterháza, Győr, Pannonhalma. Eszterháza (Fertőd) is the most magnificent of Hungarian country houses; built in the 1770s, Joseph Haydn worked here every summer for thirty years. Győr has a very lovely and extensive historic centre with buildings of many periods, including a Romanesque-cum-Baroque cathedral with a 15th-century golden reliquary. Pannonhalma is a major Benedictine abbey situated on a hill; bold Neo-Classical tower, church, library, art gallery.

Day 4: Veszprém, Tihany, Székesfehérvár. The episcopal seat of Veszprém has a cluster of fine buildings crowning a ridge among the Bakony mountains. Suave 18th-century edifices rise from remnants of the mediaeval citadel. Beautifully sited on a promontory protruding into Lake Balaton is the abbey of Tihany. Székesfehérvár, a former capital of Hungary, has picturesque streetscape and fascinating Baroque and Neo-Classical architecture. Overnight Székesfehérvár.

Day 5: Kecskemét. Kecskemét, the city of the Great Plain, is surrounded by vineyards and orchards, particularly of apricot. The centre is largely composed of fascinating turn-of-the-century architecture by Ödön Lechner and others. Continue to Eger, perhaps architecturally the finest 18th-century city in Hungary. First of three nights in Eger.

Day 6: Eger. Visit Eger's massive Neo-Classical cathedral. The splendid former university built 1765–85 has a Maulbertsch fresco in the chapel and a magnificent library with the ceiling painted by J.L. Kracker. Visit the Baroque County Hall with outstanding wrought-iron gates, the Gothic Bishop's Palace and 18th-century Archbishop's Palace and the splendid Minorite church designed by K.I. Dientzenhofer.

Day 7: Eger, Bélapátfalva, Noszvaj. The morning is free for independent exploration of this lovely city, perhaps to visit the art gallery. Afternoon excursion into the countryside including the De la Motte Mansion at Noszvaj with its Rococo decoration and the Romanesque Cistercian church at Bélapátfalva.

Day 8. Fly to Heathrow, arriving c. 3.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,140 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus A320 and A319); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 7 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; admission charges; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and Hungarian escort. **Single supplement £190. Price without flights £1,990.**

Hotels: Győr (3 nights): excellent, small, Swiss-owned 3-star in a quiet side street of the centre. Székesfehérvár (1 night): newly built, rather bland business hotel, locally rated as 4-star. Eger (3 nights): a clean and comfortable hotel in the heart of the old town, rated as 4-star.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking and some long coach journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 96 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

INDIA

Martin Randall Travel is preparing to introduce a range of exceptional tours to India. The first is scheduled to take place towards the end of 2012, with four or five following in that winter/spring season. The number will steadily rise in subsequent years.

As with all our tours, they will be accompanied by leading experts – historians, art historians, writers, academics, curators – carefully chosen for their learning, their ability to put their knowledge across and for the agreeableness of their company.

The tours will be designed around a theme or bundle of themes, but this will not preclude learning about broader aspects of Indian culture, past and present. We believe that the intellectual stimulation arising from giving primacy to particular subject matter cannot be matched by a general interest tour.

In our view, most group tours and tailor-made trips to India travel too far, too fast. Ours will travel less but see more – and not just see, but understand. More time will be spent in those places that are visited. Even in the most visited places, there is often a huge amount that is fascinating and beautiful which very few visitors get to see. There will also be time to absorb, contemplate or just relax.

Less visited, out-of-the-way places will be a significant feature, sometimes at the expense of sights which are well known but overrun with tourists and the attendant tackiness. Special access and privileged meetings will also be an ingredient of the tours

Full details of the first season will be launched early in 2012. If you would like to receive these, and bulletins we will issue about the India Project before then, please register with us now.

Wexford Opera

The international festival in south-east Ireland

1–5 November 2011 (MY 111)
5 days • £1,710
Lecturer: Professor Jan Smaczny

October/November 2012
Details available in January.
Please contact us to register your interest.

Rare operas performed by international casts of world-class standards in the new, state of the art Opera House.

Donizetti's *Gianni di Parigi*; Roman Statkowski's *Maria*; *La cour de Célimene* by Ambroise Thomas, and a recital.

Engraving 1886 after a drawing by George Cruikshank.

The stunning Wexford Opera House is as much of a draw as the music performed within during the annual opera festival. The site of the old 'Theatre Royal' has been dramatically transformed and expanded, whilst managing to retain its subtle external appearance – the copper clad fly-tower is hardly perceptible against the low-lying buildings of Wexford. The new auditorium provides excellent acoustics, sight lines and comfort.

It is fitting that the famously innovative music programme should be presented in such an architecturally innovative setting. Wexford specialises in little-known and long-neglected works, three each year, allegedly 'one for the heart, one for the head and one for fun'.

Commenting on his seventh season as Artistic Director of Wexford Festival Opera, David Agler said, 'First of the three operas is *La cour de Célimene*, an opera-comique by Ambroise Thomas, the composer of *Mignon* and *Hamlet*, immensely successful in its day, now fallen by the wayside. We will also produce *Maria*, written in 1903 by Roman Statkowski, a magnificent composition strangely ignored even in his native Poland. And in honour of our 60th season, we will make use of the most popular of Wexford's composers, Gaetano Donizetti, and produce his 1839 melodrama *Gianni di Parigi*'.

To participate in the festival is to partake of a delicious gallimaufry of musical and extra-musical experience, liberally seasoned with surprises. The festival is enriched with chamber concerts in St Iberius church, some reduced concert performances of well-known operas (the short works), and fringe events.

Our package includes tickets for all three operas and a recital, as well as excursions and visits and talks by our lecturer.

Itinerary

Day 1: Dublin to Wexford. The tour begins at Dublin airport at 1.15pm (flights are not included in the tour price). Drive south by coach to Wexford (approximately two hours). Some free time at the hotel. Lecture and dinner.

Day 2: Wexford. A leisurely start with talks about the festival's operas. There is opportunity to explore Wexford (transport is provided between the hotel and the town centre) or to relax in and around the hotel. Dinner in the hotel restaurant. Evening opera: ***Gianni di Parigi** (1839, Gaetano Donizetti, sung in Italian).*

Day 3: Kilkenny, Wexford. Drive through beguiling unkempt and green countryside to the historic town of Kilkenny. After a tour of the castle, once one of the grandest residences in Ireland, there is free time to explore. Historic buildings include the mediaeval Anglican cathedral, Georgian town hall and court house and the Gothic revival Catholic cathedral. Some free time at the hotel. Evening opera: ***La cour de Célimene** (1855, Ambroise Thomas, sung in French).*

Day 4: Johnstown Castle, Wexford. Although the building itself is closed to the public, Johnstown Castle has extensive woodland gardens, an ornamental lake and a fascinating museum of Irish history and country life. To Wexford for a lunchtime recital (*to be confirmed*). Free afternoon. Evening opera: ***Maria** (1903, Roman Statkowski, sung in Polish).*

Day 5: Castletown House. Drive towards Dublin. Castletown House is a splendid edifice, and the largest Palladian country house in Ireland. The coach returns to Dublin airport by 3.15pm.

Practicalities

Price in 2011: £1,710, (deposit £200). This includes: tickets to 4 performances, costing c. £360; travel by private coach from Dublin airport and for excursions; minibus transfers between the hotel and Wexford centre; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; festival programme; all admissions; all tips; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement** (double room for sole use) **£160.**

Hotel: a very comfortable hotel in a tranquil location 3 miles from the centre of Wexford beside the estuary of the River Slaney. Bedrooms have been innovatively but tastefully refurbished, they are sizeable, well equipped and quiet (all overlook the water). Landscaped grounds, terraces, two restaurants, quiet lounge. Fitness centre with pool and spa.

Flights: given the range of flights to Dublin from many UK airports, we are not providing flights to enable you to arrange ones which are convenient for you. Please make sure you allow plenty of time around your flights to meet the group at the specified time in the itinerary.

How strenuous? Some walking is unavoidable, sometimes on narrow, cobbled streets. In the opera house stairs are steep but there is a lift. Plenty of free time and mornings are intentionally leisurely. Dinners are before operas where possible. Average distance by coach per day: 68 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE

ARCHAEOLOGY, ARCHITECTURE & ART IN THE HOLY LAND

25 Oct.–3 Nov. 2011 (MY 104)
10 days • £3,490
Lecturer: Dr Garth Gilmore

7–16 February 2012 (MY 161)
10 days • £3,550
Lecturer: Dr Garth Gilmour

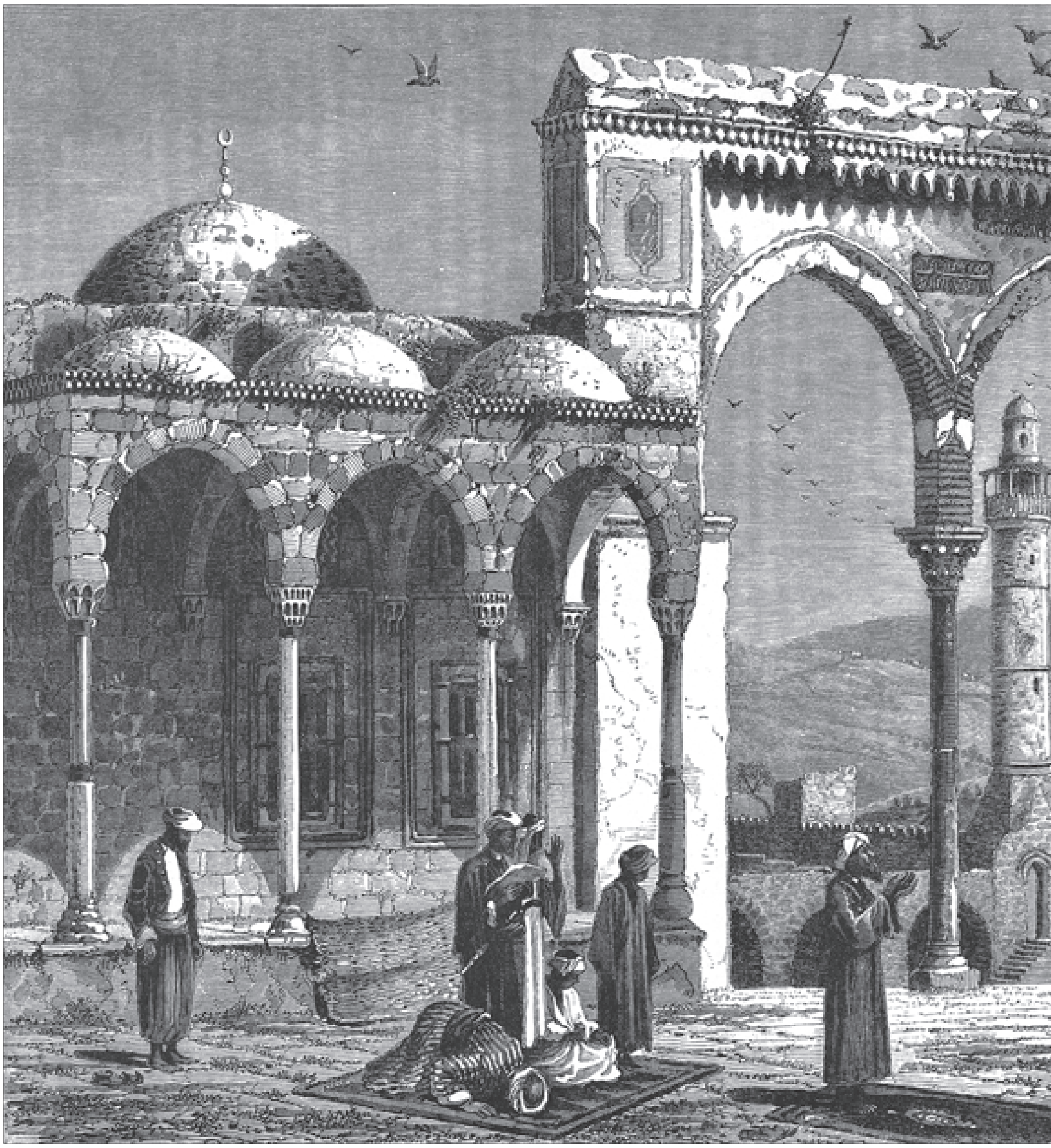
16–25 October 2012 (MZ 411)
10 days • £3,660
Lecturer: Dr Garth Gilmour

Some of the most important and evocative archaeological sites in the western hemisphere.

Ancient and mediaeval and modern architecture, from Herod to Bauhaus, Jewish, Roman, Christian and Islamic.

Enthralling streetscape and vernacular architecture in ancient walled towns, varied landscapes from rocky deserts to verdant valleys.

Several days in Jerusalem, surely the most extraordinary city on earth.


Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock, wood engraving c. 1890 from 'Picturesque Palestine, Sinai & Egypt' Volume I.

Ancient Canaan, the bridge between Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria and Mesopotamia; land of the Patriarchs, home to the Philistines, the Jebusites and the tribes of Israel. A land where the kingdom of David triumphantly rose around 1000 BC and where the splendour of Solomon's Temple was created. Jews, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and Turks all made their mark; the history of the land is characterised by conquest and exile.

Herod the Great (37–4 BC) was one of the greatest builders of the ancient world. Christianity brought a new wave of construction after Emperor Constantine and his mother, St Helena, in the fourth century AD consecrated the sites associated with Jesus. The final monotheistic religion to arrive was Islam when in AD 637 Caliph Omar conquered Jerusalem. Another religion, and yet another monumental building, this time the Dome of the Rock.

The Crusaders instigated another burst of building activity, planting European Romanesque and Gothic churches and castles tempered by local techniques. Mamluks and Ottomans trampled and rebuilt, and after the First World War, with Jewish immigration accelerating, the British were left to hold the rope until the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Jerusalem is the most extraordinary city in the world. Within the walls – and the complete circuit survives, the current edition being sixteenth-century – it is a vibrant, authentic Middle Eastern city, but one with sharply distinct communities and largely composed of ancient and mediaeval masonry. Nowhere else is the historical interpretation of archaeological remains so crucial to current political debate.

Israel and Palestine are extraordinary places where Biblical names on road signs demonstrate the closeness of the distant past and where history, politics and religion are impossible to separate. The tour is led by an archaeologist, and uses the remains to illuminate peoples and civilizations of the past. It is not a pilgrimage tour in that buildings and sites are selected for intrinsic aesthetic or historical merit rather than religious association.

The tour ranges across two countries (Palestine may be recognised as a sovereign state by the time these tours run), and in none: strictly speaking, the old walled centre of Jerusalem is neither Israel nor Palestine.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 3.30pm from London Heathrow to Tel Aviv, and then drive to Jerusalem, reaching the hotel c. 11.00pm. Four nights are spent here.

Day 2: Jerusalem. The buildings in the Old City and around (the walled kernel has shifted over the millennia) comprise an incomparable mix of ages and cultures from the time of King David to the present day, while continuing to be a thriving, living city. The massive stones and underground tunnels of Herod's Temple Mount are highly impressive survivals from the ancient world. In the afternoon a walk along a

section of the ramparts leads to further Roman-era structures in the Ecce Homo Convent and the Bethesda Pools, and to the Crusader church of St Anne. View the seeming panorama of belfries, domes, minarets and city wall from the Mount of Olives. Overnight Jerusalem.

Day 3: Jerusalem, Bethlehem. The intact 7th-cent. Dome of the Rock stands majestically in the vast Haram ash-sharif complex, complete with Umayyad and Mamluk buildings and the El-Aqsa Mosque, all on the site of Solomon's Temple. Drive through the 'Separation Wall' into occupied territory on the West Bank. On the edge of the Judaean Desert, the Herodion is a remarkable fortified palace (and tomb?) complex built for King Herod. The 4th/6th-century Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem is one of the greatest buildings of its era, and probably the oldest church in continuous use for Christian worship. Overnight Jerusalem.

Day 4: Jerusalem. Mainly Constantinian and Crusader, but confusingly complex, compartmentalised and embellished with later ornamentation, a proper study of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre reveals a deeply fascinating building. Among the items seen during the rest of the day are the Roman colonnaded Cardo, the largely 13th-century Armenian Cathedral, a 17th-century synagogue and the ancient and mediaeval Citadel. Free time is an alternative, possibly with a visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum. Overnight Jerusalem.

Day 5: Masada, Ein Gedi. Drive through Israel to the Dead Sea Valley, the lowest place on earth. Rising high above the Judaean desert, Herod's fortified palace of Masada, last redoubt of the Jewish rebellion against Roman occupation, is one of the most impressive archaeological sites in the Levant. A little to the north lies the oasis of Ein Gedi, where there is time to enjoy the botanical gardens or for a swim in the Dead Sea. One night is spent at Ein Gedi.

Day 6: Qumran, Jericho, Galilee. Re-enter occupied Palestinian Territories. Qumran is site of the settlement of the Essenes, a Jewish sect, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The palm-shaded oasis of Jericho is the world's most low-lying town and perhaps its oldest continuously inhabited one, the Tell as-Sultan dating back 10,000 years. Nearby, Hisham's Palace is a remarkably well preserved 8th-century Umayyad palace. Continue north, re-enter Israel and spend the first of two nights in Tiberias.

Day 7: Sea of Galilee, Tzefat. Visit first the archaeological site of Tell Hazor, and then ascend the Galilean highlands to the mediaeval synagogues and cobbled streets of the town of Tzefat. The churches of the Heptapegon are locations of Jesus's ministry where pilgrims from all over the world share the sites. See the remains of the fishing village of Capernaum, Jesus's most permanent residence and site of a 5th-century synagogue. Take a boat on the Sea of Galilee, and overnight Tiberias.

Day 8: Akko, Caesarea. Akko (Acre) was the principal city of the Crusaders, though the vaulted halls surviving from that period lie below an enthralling maze of narrow streets, Ottoman khans and modern suqs. Drive beside the Mount Carmel range to Caesarea, founded by Herod the Great and capital of Judaea for over 600 years. Once the largest city of the eastern Mediterranean, remains include the Herodian theatre, Byzantine residential quarters and a Crusader church. First of two nights Tel Aviv.

Day 9: Tel Aviv, Jaffa. Tel Aviv began as an English-style garden city suburb of Jaffa, sprouted a Bauhaus extension (the 'White City', a UNESCO Heritage Site) and grew remorselessly in the later 20th century. The Museum of Art has Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, the Eretz Israel Museum incorporates the Tell Qasile excavations and an outstanding collection of ancient and mediaeval glass. Jaffa (Japheth) was a port city from the time of Solomon and remains a charmingly picturesque enclave. Overnight Tel Aviv.

Day 10: Jerusalem. Drive back to Jerusalem to visit the excellent Israel Museum. This incorporates, among other collections, the Shrine of the Book which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls and the outstanding archaeological collection. Fly in the afternoon from Tel Aviv, returning to Heathrow at c. 9.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,550 (February), **£3,660** (October) (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled El Al flights (aircraft: Boeing 777-200); private coach for all other journeys; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 5 lunches and 7 dinners with wine, water and coffee; admissions to museums and sites; tips for restaurant staff, guides, drivers; airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guides. **Single supplement £460** (February), **£490** (October). **Price without flights £3,190** (February), **£3,300** (October).

Hotels. In Jerusalem (4 nights): a 5-star hotel in West Jerusalem within walking distance of the Old City. In Ein Gedi (1 night): a renovated kibbutz near the Dead Sea with comfortable cottages set among beautiful botanic gardens. In Galilee (2 nights): a long-established 5-star hotel by the lake in Tiberias. Tel Aviv (2 nights): a 5-star hotel with all expected amenities and well-appointed rooms.

Visas: are obtained on arrival at no extra charge for most nationalities.

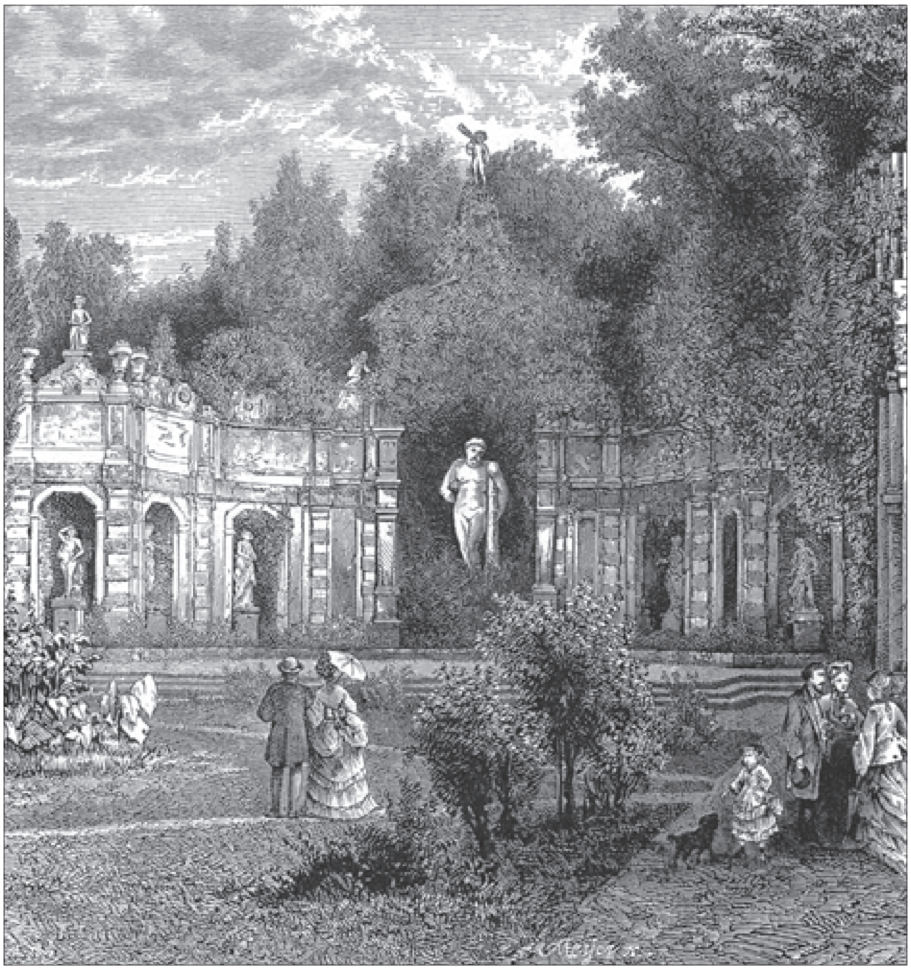
How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, some of it over rough ground and uneven paving, and sure-footedness is essential. Average distance by coach per day: 36 miles.

Small group: between 14 and 22 participants.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

GARDENS & VILLAS OF THE ITALIAN LAKES

COMO & MAGGIORE



Rotunda of Hercules on Isola Bella, wood engraving c. 1900.

19–25 April 2012 (MY 218)
7 days • £2,390
Lecturer: Steven Desmond

20–26 September 2012 (MZ 371)
7 days • £2,420
Lecturer: Steven Desmond

A wonderful variety of villas and gardens around Lakes Maggiore and Como.

Some of the most fascinating historic gardens in Europe, all enhanced by splendid natural settings.

Lakeside hotels.

The gardens of the Italian lakes fall into two categories: formal, terraced, parterred, allegoried and enclosed summer residences of native landowners, and the expansive, landscaped villa grounds of the rich and splendid. Some are small, others huge; some ostentatious, others retiring; some immaculate, others picturesquely mouldering. Many are the former homes of Austrian aristocrats, Napoleonic grandees, *bel canto* composers or British seasonal emigrants. All respond to the setting, gazing out across bays and peninsulas, or up to mountain scenery of heroic dimensions.

The tour is divided between Lake Como and Lake Maggiore. Lake Como, the home of Pliny, is intensely romantic: Shelley, Bellini and Stendhal found inspiration here on the shores of a long and slender lake divided in three parts. The little town of Bellagio surveys all three from its glittering headland, and provides a convenient (and luxurious) base for visiting the lakeside villa gardens.

Lake Maggiore is altogether broader and more open, extending northwards into Switzerland, with the air of an inland sea. The great western bay includes the famous Borromean Islands, among them the contrasting garden retreats of Isola Bella and Isola Madre. As early as 1686 Bishop Burnet gushed that these were 'certainly the loveliest spots of ground in the World, there is nothing in all Italy that can be compared to them'.

Our tours are scheduled at times of the year when there is the possibility of clear, brilliant sunshine. Each lake, each shore, each promontory and island has its own character, but everywhere is pervaded by the abundance of light, perfume and natural beauty.

Itinerary

Day 1: Bellagio. Fly at c. 12.00pm from London Heathrow to Milan. Drive to Bellagio on Lake Como. First of three nights in Bellagio.

Day 2: Bellagio. The Neo-Classical Villa Melzi at Bellagio was built in 1810 for Francesco Melzi d'Eril, vice-president of Napoleon's Italian Republic. It overlooks the lake in an undulating English landscape park, richly planted and decorated with ornamental buildings. The Villa Serbelloni, probably built on the site of one of Pliny the Younger's two villas on Lake Como, occupies the high ground above Bellagio. The woods offer magnificent views to all parts of the lake. The mediaeval remnants, 16th-century villa and later terraces are the setting for planting schemes in a backdrop described by Stendhal as 'a sublime and enchanting spectacle'.

Day 3: Lake Como. Villa Carlotta on the western shore of Lake Como, built as a summer residence for a Milanese aristocrat, combines dramatic terracing, parterre and grottoes with an extensive landscape park and arboretum. The house contains notable collections from the Napoleonic period. The Villa Balbianello occupies its own headland projecting into the middle of Lake Como, and can only be approached by boat. This glorious site is terraced to provide sites for lawns, trees, shrubs and a chorus of statuary. The villa stands among groves of oak and pine.

Day 4: Renaissance villa gardens. At the Villa Cicogna Mozzoni at Bisuschio, north of Varese, the 16th-century house and garden are thoroughly intertwined; the courtyard of pools and parterres leads to a water staircase, grottoes and *giochi d'acqua*. Lunch at the villa. The Villa della Porta Bozzolo, tucked away in a mountain valley near Lake Maggiore, is a hidden treasure of a garden, shooting straight up a dramatic hillside from the village street of Casalzuigno. The beautiful 17th-century villa is unexpectedly set to one side to increase the visual drama. First of three nights in Pallanza.

Day 5: the Borromean Islands. Isola Bella is one of the world's great gardens (and correspondingly popular), a wedding cake of terraces and greenery floating improbably in Lake Maggiore. The sense of surrealism is enhanced by the symbolic statuary and the flock of white peacocks. Isola Madre is the ideal dessert to follow Isola Bella: a relaxed, informal landscape garden around a charmingly domestic villa. Visual entertainments include the marvellous plant collection, revitalised by Henry Cocker in the 1950s, the chapel garden, puppet theatre and ambulant aviary.

Day 6: Pallanza. The Villa San Remigio at Pallanza is an Anglo-Italian evocation of a Renaissance garden made at the turn of the 20th century. Intensely overlaid with sentiment and stuffed with detail, it lingers in romantic decay. The Villa Táranto is an extravagant piece of 20th-century kitsch created by Henry Cocker for his patron, the enigmatic Neil MacEachern. The alarmingly gauche design is superbly planted and maintained with loving zeal by the present staff.

Day 7. Some free time. Drive to Milan. The flight to Heathrow arrives at c. 5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,390 (April), **£2,420** (Sept.) (deposit £250); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); travel by private coach, boat and public ferry; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £240** (double room for sole occupancy). **Price without flights £2,210** (April), **£2,240** (Sept.).

Hotels: Bellagio (3 nights): excellently situated on the edge of the lake, a historic 5-star hotel with lavishly decorated public rooms and well-appointed bedrooms (they vary in size). Pallanza (3 nights): a recently renovated, privately owned 4-star Belle Epoque hotel with lakeside gardens; bedrooms vary in size.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and some of the gardens are extensive, and all have uneven ground. Participants need to be fit and sure-footed. The average distance by coach per day is 23 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

GASTRONOMIC PIEDMONT

SOME OF THE FINEST FOOD & WINE IN ITALY

From 'The Foreign Tour of Brown, Jones & Robinson' 1904.

1–7 October 2011 (MY 976)
This tour is currently full.

6–12 October 2012 (MZ 396)
7 days • £2,660
Lecturer to be confirmed.

Piedmont is one of the most prestigious and arguably the most exciting gastronomic regions in Italy.

Study wine and food production with the growers and makers, enjoy tastings and have meals in an excellent range of restaurants.

Beautiful landscapes: upland pasturage, rolling hills, sloping vineyards and hazelnut woods.

Time also for exploring the art and architecture of ancient towns and villages.

Gastronomically, Piedmont is undoubtedly one of Italy's most interesting regions. Its wines are superb, the food produced there is varied and the delicious cooking ranges from traditional country fare to creatively modern cuisine. Moreover, the region is the centre of the Slow Food revolution which is transforming gastronomy in Italy and beyond.

There is also another winning feature: many Piedmontese in the food and wine business have a desire to share their passion, and welcome interested visitors with generous amounts of their time and produce. In part this may be because visitors are relatively few, despite the high reputation which Piedmont enjoys.

For this tour we have bypassed Turin in favour of spending time in the countryside, seeing the origins of the food and wine and meeting the producers. This bucolic exile is not at the expense of culinary excellence; you will find superb restaurants, from simple rustic trattorias where Granny's recipes are still gospel, to Michelin-starred and innovative establishments, all serving some of Italy's finest food.

The study and enjoyment of wines is a large part of the tour. Barolo is the dominant wine – noble, austere and complex, and the Nebbiolo grape is used for the elegant, tarry Barbaresco, and various other DOCs. We meet makers, chosen as much for their charm and communicativeness as for their wines, in some cases study their vines and the wine-making process, and taste the results. Among the foods we investigate, truffles are significant – Alba is something of a truffle capital – but the mountain cheeses, particularly the prestigious Castelmagno, make an equally powerful impression.

Landscape is another of the great pleasures of the tour. As its name suggests, Piedmont reaches from high pastures to alluvial plains, and much of it is used for agriculture (or small family-run farms). The Langhe hills are among the most beautiful in Italy, the flanks almost entirely carpeted with vineyards, the summits sporting castles, little mediaeval towns or ancient farmsteads.

Itinerary

Day 1: London to Piedmont. Fly at c. 10.30am from London Gatwick to Genova and drive north to the market town of Bra, an attractive market town with some fine architecture. First of four nights in Bra.

Day 2: Bra, Alba, Serralunga. Study the local wine-making process at the Ascheri winery adjacent to the hotel. There is a truffle seminar and lunch in Alba, chief town of the Langhe. The castle in Serralunga is one of the most dramatic in Le Langhe. Dinner in Pollenzo at a Michelin-starred restaurant. Overnight Bra.

Day 3: Piozzo, Dogliani, La Morra. Truffle hunting in woods around Piozzo. The landscape between Dogliani and Murrazano is a patchwork of vineyards and rumpled hills, woods and pasturage. Lunch in Carrù, famous for its *bollito misto*. There is a tasting at Rocche Costamagna, a winery in the hilltop village of La Morra which has been in the family for 300 years, a well-known producer of Barolo and other Nebbiolo and Barbera wines. Dinner is independent in Bra (plenty of choice, including the hotel). Overnight Bra.

Day 4: Asti. The lovely little city of Asti, centre of another famous wine and food area, is set amidst the gently undulating Monferrato hills. Barbera and Dolcetto grapes predominate, but white wines are also produced, including the sparkling Moscato d'Asti. Our gastronomic visits include a nougat producer. Lunch is at an outstanding restaurant, before time also to see something of the town: narrow, twisting mediaeval streets, the grand Gothic cathedral, tower houses and 18th-century palaces. Overnight Bra.

Day 5: Bra, Cherasco, Cuneo. Most of the morning is free in Bra. There is the option of visiting a traditional sausage maker or a wine tasting. Alternatively, there is a guided walk of c. 6 km across the vine-clad hills of the Barolo region. Leave Bra for Cherasco, a little walled town with good architecture and the Italian capital of snail farming. Lunch at a family-run restaurant here followed by time to look around. In the castle at Manta there are some marvellous mediaeval frescos. Reaching Cuneo, settle into the hotel before a demonstration of Piedmontese pasta making. First of two nights in Cuneo.

Day 6: Valle Grana, Castelmagno, Cuneo. The steep-sided valley of the river Grana is the sole source of one of Italy's finest cheeses, Castelmagno. Visit farms to see aspects of its production. Continue to mountain pastures (c. 1,700 metres) above Castelmagno to a pilgrimage church for a mountain-top picnic of bread and cheese bought today and wine acquired during the week (wet-weather contingency planned). Back in Cuneo there is time to explore its magnificent Neo-Classical square, ancient arcaded streets and fine churches. Dinner is at a Michelin-starred restaurant. Overnight Cuneo.

Day 7: Rivoli. Drive to Castello di Rivoli, one of the palaces of the royal house of Savoy established in hunting grounds around Turin. Rebuilt in the 18th century, though never finished, a museum of contemporary art has been installed here. Lunch here at one of the best restaurants in Piedmont, Combal Zero. On the way to the airport, briefly visit the recently restored and re-opened palace at Venaria. Fly from Turin, arriving London Gatwick at c. 6.15pm.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £2,660 (deposit £250); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Boeing 737); private coach for excursions and transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 5 lunches, 1 picnic and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, etc.; all food and wine tastings; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £180. Price without flights £2,550.**

Hotels: Bra (4 nights, 4 stars): refurbished to a very modern but enjoyable design using locally-made materials as far as possible. Service is enthusiastic, rooms are comfortable and it is 10 minutes from the city centre. Cuneo (2 nights, 4 stars): excellently situated just off the ancient arcaded Via Roma, the decor is traditional and tasteful with dark woods and faux-Rococo wall paintings. Staff are helpful and there is a good restaurant.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking involved. Participants on the optional 6 km walk on Day 5 need to be used to hiking up and down hills. Surefootedness is essential for truffle hunting in the woods. Average distance by coach per day: 53 miles.

Small group: the tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

GENOA & TURIN

16–22 April 2012 (MY 212)
7 days • £1,880
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

22–28 October 2012 (MZ 412)
7 days • £1,880
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

Two grand cities in north-western Italy, unaccountably neglected by tourists.

Great art and architecture from mediaeval to Baroque, particularly rich in palaces.

Secret cities, despite the allure of botched alliteration, would have been an absurd subtitle for two such major places, but did seem to suggest itself because of the rarity with which Britons find themselves there. But every art lover should go.

The prevailing images are perhaps still predominantly commercial and industrial, but not only do both Genoa and Turin have highly attractive centres but both are distinguished by the preservation of a large number of magnificent palaces and picture collections.

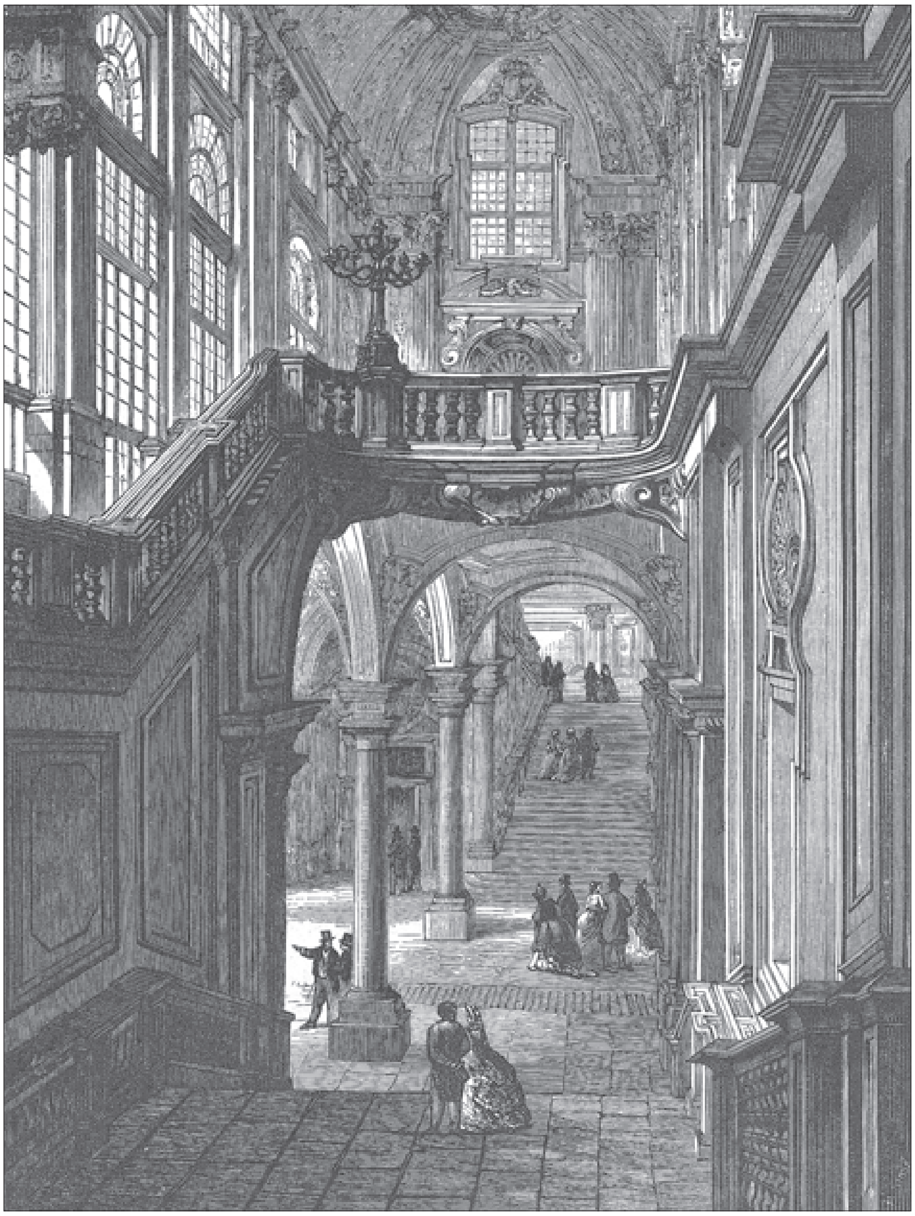
Genoa lays claim to the largest historic centre of any European city. It was one of the leading maritime republics of mediaeval Italy (with Marseilles it remains the largest port in the Mediterranean), and enjoyed a golden age during the seventeenth century. In the 1990s civic improvements and building restorations were undertaken to prepare the city for celebrations connected with the quincentenary of Columbus's first voyage to the Americas, and the cultural momentum has continued.

In the earlier seventeenth century, Genoa was artistically the equal of almost anywhere in Italy except for Rome and Naples. More than any other Italian school of painting, the Genoese was indebted to the Flemish school: Rubens made a prolonged visit to Genoa in 1605 and Anthony Van Dyck was based there from 1621 to 1627. Many of his paintings remain here.

Turin, the leading city of Piedmont, was formerly capital of Savoy and later of the kingdom of Sardinia. Developed on a grand scale in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the historic centre is laid out on a regular plan with broad avenues and spacious piazze. Architecture is mainly Baroque and classical. Guarino Guarini and Filippo Juvarra, among the best architects of their time, worked here for much of their lives.

Itinerary

Day 1: Genoa. Fly at c. 10.30am from London Gatwick to Genoa. In the afternoon see palaces in the Via Balbi, one of the grandest streets in



Turin, Palazzo Madama, wood engraving from 'The Art Journal' 1872.

Europe, including the Palazzo Reale which has a magnificent stairway, splendidly furnished rooms and a fine collection of pictures. First of three nights in Genoa.

Day 2: Genoa. Visit some of the main monuments of mediaeval Genoa. The Cathedral of S. Lorenzo, built 12th–16th centuries, possesses many works of art and a fine treasury. Palazzo Spinola has good pictures, Van Dycks in particular. Visit the church of S. Luca with its beautifully decorated interior and the churches of Il Gesù and San Donato. Overnight Genoa.

Day 3: Genoa. See the Via Garibaldi, lined with magnificent palazzi, most from the 16th century and retaining sumptuous interiors of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Palazzo Rosso has fine furnishings and excellent pictures. See also the adjacent church of the Annunciation, the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj with Perin del Vaga frescoes and the Piazza S. Matteo, formed by the imposing palaces of the Doria family, which overshadow the small family church of S. Matteo. Free time in the afternoon. Possible visits include the refashioned dock area (architect: Renzo Piano) and further churches and galleries. Overnight Genoa.

Day 4: Genoa, Cherasco, Turin. Leave Genoa and take a cross-country route through the beautiful countryside and wine-producing area of Le Langhe. Stop in Cherasco which has a 14th-century Visconti castle for a typical Piedmontese lunch. See the magnificent royal hunting lodge of Stupinigi (Filippo Juvarra, 1730) en route to Turin. First of three nights in Turin.

Day 5: Turin. A morning walk through beautiful Piazza S. Carlo, with arcades and 18th-century churches. Visit the little church of S. Lorenzo, a Guarini masterpiece, and the cathedral, with Guarini's Chapel of the Holy Shroud and the sumptuous Consolata church. Afternoon visit to the Palazzo Madama in the centre of Piazza Castello, now housing the City Art Museum, and the Royal Palace, built 1660, with wonderful interiors from the 17th–19th centuries. Walk via the metal dome and spire of the 19th-cent. Mole Antonelliana and the Palazzo Carignano by Guarini. Overnight Turin.

Day 6: Turin. Morning visit to the Galleria Sabauda, an excellent picture collection housed inside the Guarini's Palazzo Dell'Accademia. Visit the votive church of Superga, a magnificent hilltop structure by Juvarra. Free time to visit the Egyptian Museum, one of the best in Europe, or the Gallery of Modern Art. Overnight Turin.

Day 7: Turin, Venaria. Visit the Pinacoteca Giovanni and Marella Agnelli at Lingotto which has a small but excellent quality collection in a building designed by Renzo Piano. Outside Turin is the magnificent royal palace of Venaria (Amedeo Castellamonte, 1659) reopened in 2007 following extensive renovation work. Fly from Turin returning to Gatwick c. 6.15pm.

Practicalities

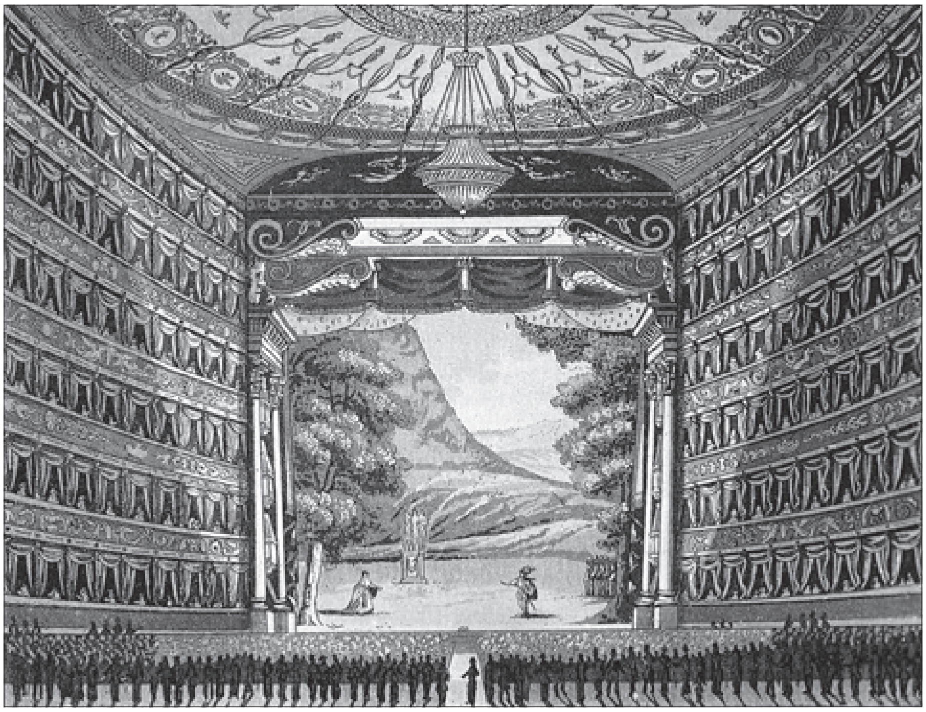
Price: £1,880 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); private coach for excursions and transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £310** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £1,720.**

Hotel: in Genoa (3 nights): a 5-star hotel close to the Palazzo Reale, recently renovated. In Turin (3 nights): a 4-star hotel, comfortable, elegantly furnished and very central. Dinners are in carefully selected restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing in museums.
Average distance by coach per day: 26 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

DER ROSENKAVALIER AT LA SCALA



La Scala, aquatint c. 1830.

15–18 October 2011 (MY 102)
4 days • £1,740
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

Attends the 100th anniversary production of *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss in the world's most renowned opera house.

Includes a guided tour of La Scala, its museum, and the theatre's workshop.

Visits to Milan's finest historical, artistic and cultural sites.

A talk with one of the principal cast members of *Der Rosenkavalier.*

The world's most famous opera house, with an unrivalled history and prestige, the Teatro alla Scala was inaugurated in 1778. After its extensive refurbishment from 2002 to 2004 and the melodrama of recent management controversies, La Scala is now very much back to its artistic best, the world's greatest performers ensuring a packed house.

Der Rosenkavalier was first performed in the Königliches Opernhaus in Dresden on 26 January 1911 under the direction of Max Reinhardt. It received a triumphant reaction and, as arguably the composer's most popular opera, remains firmly established in the standard repertory today. It received its Italian premiere at the Teatro alla Scala on 1st March 1911, using an Italian translation; our tour attends La Scala's centenary production which in 2011 is sung in German with an electronic libretto available in Italian, English, and German.

While rightly renowned as the world capital of fashion (as well as opera), and as a commercial and financial powerhouse, Milan's fascinatingly rich historical character is often overlooked. Indeed, it has one of the proudest and most illustrious histories of all Italian cities, not least its influential role in the Risorgimento, the 150th anniversary of which is celebrated this year. Characteristically eschewing such short-sightedness, we spend ample time visiting the city's historical and artistic treasures.

These vary from the internationally-renowned Pinacoteca Brera, packed with big names from Italy's unrivalled artistic heritage, to the extraordinary and enchanting Museo Poldi Pezzoli, the preserved house of an art collector. We visit one of the most ancient churches in Milan, the great Romanesque Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio, rebuilt in the twelfth century and very much the spiritual hub of the city, as well as the nearby monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie, whose dining hall walls boast the fresco of *The Last Supper* by Leonardo.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at around noon from London Heathrow to Milan Linate. Take an afternoon stroll in Milan, including the spectacular marble Gothic cathedral.

Day 2. Visit the Renaissance church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, in whose refectory is Leonardo's *Last Supper*. Visit the Brera, one of Italy's finest art galleries with most of the greatest Italian artists represented.

Day 3. The Museo Poldi Pezzoli has works by Botticelli, Mantegna and many others. There is a guided tour of the La Scala museum, containing portraits of Verdi, Puccini and others, plus a wealth of historically significant instruments. After an afternoon talk with one of the chief performers, there is an evening performance at La Scala of ***Der Rosenkavalier*** *(Strauss), Philippe Jordan (conductor), Herbert Wernicke (staging); soloists include Anne Schwanewilms, Peter Rose and Joyce DiDonato.*

Day 4. There is a guided tour of the Scalo Ansaldo, the La Scala workshops with vast pavilions where scenery, staging and costumes are created. Return to London Heathrow at c. 3.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,740 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 320); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and two dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, galleries etc. visited with the group; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £205** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £1,560.**

Hotel: a 4-star superior hotel in a Belle Epoque-style located in the city centre, 100 metres from the Piazza del Duomo and La Scala and five minutes' walk from the financial district.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking as much of the centre is closed to traffic. Participants need to be averagely fit and able to manage everyday walking and stairclimbing without any difficulty. The average distance by coach per day is 5 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

PARMA VERDI FESTIVAL

October 2012
Details available Autumn 2011.
Contact us to register your interest.

Palladian Villas

The greatest house builder in history

10–15 April 2012 (MY 206)
6 days • £1,660
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

5–10 June 2012 (MY 269)
6 days • £1,690
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

9–14 October 2012 (MZ 392)
6 days • £1,690
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

A survey of nearly all the villas designed by Andrea Palladio (1508–80).

Stay throughout in Vicenza, Palladio's home town and where he built many palaces.

With several special appointments, the itinerary would be impossible for independent travellers.

Utility is the key to understanding Palladio's villas. In sixteenth-century Italy a villa was a farm, and in the Veneto agriculture had become a serious business for the city-based mercantile aristocracy. As the Venetian maritime empire gradually crumbled before the advancing Ottoman Turks, Venetians compensated by investing in the *terra ferma* of their hinterland.

But beauty was equally the determinant of form, though beauty of a special kind. Palladio was designing buildings for a clientele who, whether princes of commerce, traditional soldier-aristocrats or gentlemen of leisure, shared an intense admiration for ancient Rome. They were children of the High Renaissance and steeped in humanist learning. Palladio was the first architect regularly to apply the colonnaded temple fronts to secular buildings.

But the beauty of his villas was not solely a matter of applied ornament. As can be seen particularly in his low-budget, pared-down villas and auxiliary buildings there is a geometric order which arises from sophisticated systems of proportion and an unerring intuitive sense of design. It is little wonder that Andrea Palladio became the most influential architect the western world has ever known.

Most of his finest surviving villas and palaces are included on this tour, as well as some of the lesser-known and less accessible ones.

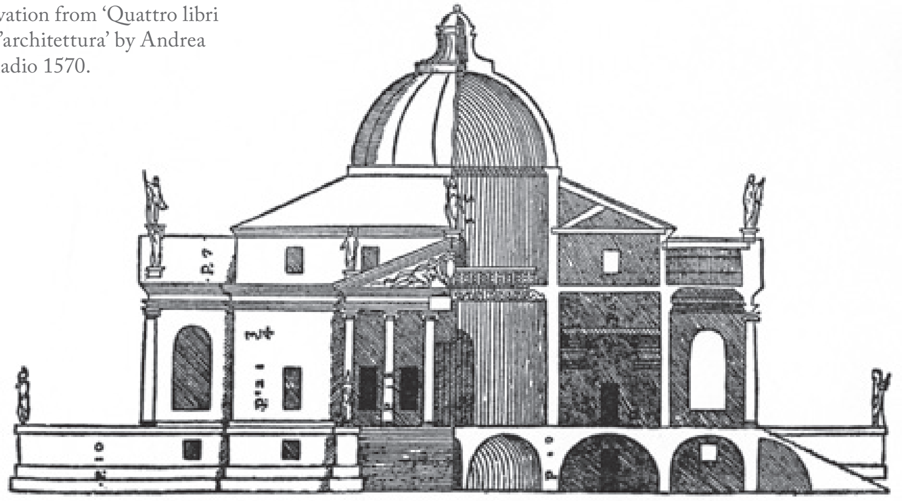
Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c.8.15am from London Gatwick to Verona (2011) or at c. 1.45pm from London Gatwick to Venice (2012). Drive to Vicenza where all five nights are spent. After settling into the hotel, there is a first walk around the centre of this exceptionally attractive little city.

Day 2. See in Vicenza several palaces by Palladio including the Palazzo Thiene and the colonnaded Palazzo Chiericati. His chief civic works here are the Basilica, the mediaeval town hall nobly encased in classical guise, and the Teatro Olimpico, the earliest theatre of modern times. The hilltop 'La Rotonda', a ten-minute drive away, is the most famous of Palladio's buildings, domed and with four porticoes. Adjacent is the 17th-century Villa Valmarana 'ai Nani' with frescoes by Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo.

Day 3. The Villa Pisani at Bagnolo di Lonigo, small but of majestic proportions, is considered by many scholars to be Palladio's first masterpiece. The Villa Badoer at Fratta Polesine, from the middle of his career, is a perfect example of Palladian hierarchy, a raised residence connected by curved colonnades to auxiliary buildings.

Day 4. In the foothills of the Dolomites, Villa Godi Malinverni is an austere cuboid design with lavish frescoes inside, and at the lovely town of Bassano there is a wooden bridge by Palladio. The Villa Barbaro at Maser, built by Palladio for two highly cultivated Venetian brothers, has superb frescoes by Veronese, while the Villa Emo at Fanzolo typically and beautifully combines the utilitarian with the monumental.



Elevation from 'Quattro libri dell'architettura' by Andrea Palladio 1570.

Day 5. Drive along a stretch of the canal between Padua and the Venetian Lagoon which is lined with the summer retreats of Venetian patricians. The Villa Foscari, 'La Malcontenta', is one of Palladio's best known and most enchanting creations. Explore one of Palladio's most evolved, most beautiful and most influential buildings, the Villa Cornaro at Piombino Dese.

Day 6. The Villa Pojana, an early work, is restrained but of noble proportions and contains models of Palladio's works. The Villa Cordellina Lombardi is a fine example of 18th-cent. Palladianism. In 2011, the flight from Verona arrives at Gatwick at c. 12.45pm (MY 973, MY 982) or c. 5.15pm (MY 105). In 2012, the flight from Venice arrives at Gatwick at c. 6.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,660 (April & June), **£1,690** (Oct.) (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Boeing 737); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £110** (April), **£280** (June & Oct.). **Price without flights £1,490** (April & June), **£1,520** (Oct.).

Hotel. We use two different 4-star hotels for these tours. In April: a small establishment in the centre of Vicenza, opened in 2008. It occupies a historic building but the decor is contemporary. Rooms are quite small and are air-conditioned. In June/October: just outside a city gate of Vicenza, well located and comfortable. A fairly undistinguished exterior screens attractively furnished, moderately sized, air-conditioned bedrooms. Staff are particularly helpful and friendly.

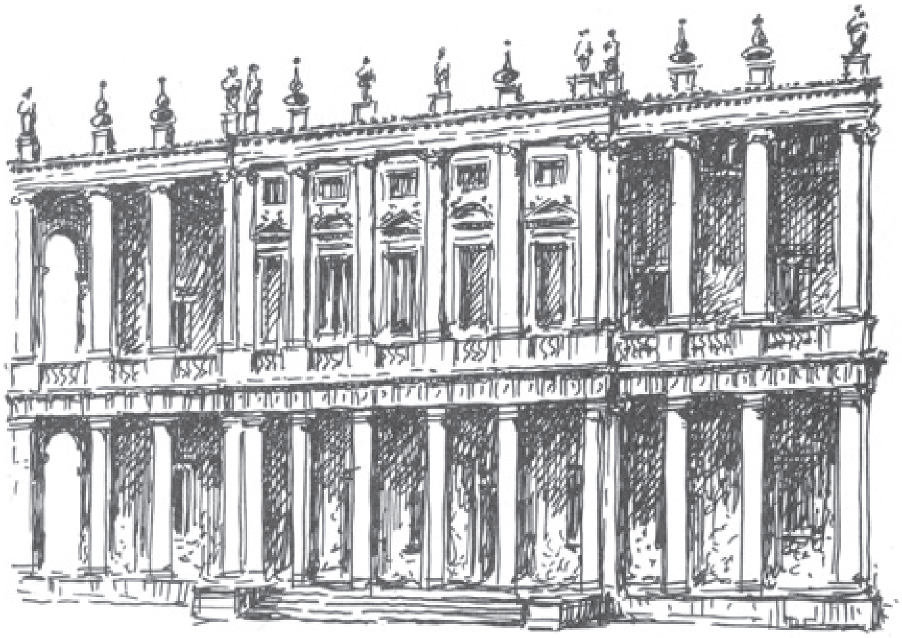
Please note: most of the villas are privately owned and require special permission to visit. The selection and order of visits may therefore vary a little from the description here.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking as the coach can rarely get close to the villas or enter town centres. Average distance by coach per day: 57 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

VILLAS OF THE VENETO

PALLADIO, HIS PREDECESSORS, HIS SUCCESSORS



Palazzo Chiericati.

21–28 October 2012 (MZ 408)
8 days • £2,150
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Study villas from the beginning of the Renaissance to the end of the 18th century.

Palladio's most famous works are included.

Some time also for a choice selection of delightful little towns.

One hotel throughout, in Vicenza.

This tour differs from the shorter Palladian Villas tour in that it ranges more widely historically. While it includes Palladio's most famous works and some of his lesser-known ones, it also presents the development of the Renaissance villa with examples from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, from vestigially fortified country mansions and Renaissance humanist retreats to Baroque and Neo-Classical elaborations on the theme.

In addition to Vicenza, where the tour is based, there are visits to the historic little towns of Bassano, Castelfranco and Montagnana, the latter two retaining their mediaeval circumvallation. Much of the countryside is delightful, with low wooded hills, varied cultivation and a backdrop of mountains.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.45am from London Heathrow to Venice. A fitting opener for the tour, the Castello Giustiniani of c. 1520 sports a castellated (but undefendable) curtain wall and a house with the earliest domestic two-storey Renaissance loggia.

Day 2. Villa Caldogno dates from 1570 and has often been attributed to Palladio. The vast estate of the Castello Porto-Colleoni has an impressive loggia flanked by rectangular towers. The 18th-century Villa Cordellina Lombardi at Montecchio is a masterpiece of the neo-Palladian architect Giorgio Massari, with frescoes by Tiepolo.

Day 3. Early Palladio is represented by Villa Pisani Ferri, small if majestic and his first independent masterpiece, and the superbly proportioned Villa Pojana Maggiore. La Rocca Pisana is a hilltop villa with 'Serlian' windows by Palladio's amenuensis Vincenzo Scamozzi. See Palladio's Villa Pisani, now a bank, in the charming little town of Montagnana.

Day 4. In Vicenza, look at a number of palazzi by Palladio, including the Palazzo Thiene (by special arrangement) and the handsomely porticoed Palazzo Chiericati (now the civic art gallery). Other buildings are the Basilica, the mediaeval town hall encased in noble classical guise (under restoration), and the Teatro Olimpico, Palladio's last work (1580) and the earliest theatre of modern times. Drive to 'La Rotonda', the most famous of Palladio's buildings, domed and with four porticoes. Villa Valmarana 'ai Nani' is a building of the 17th and 18th centuries with frescoes by Giambattista and Domenico Tiepolo.

Day 5. At Quinto Vicentino, the Villa Thiene, though incomplete, is representative of Palladio's maturity. One of Palladio's first works, the Villa Godi Malinverni is an austere cubic design with lavish frescoes inside. Lunch is served in the villa. See the wooden bridge by Palladio at Bassano and art gallery with paintings by the 16th-century Bassano family. The Villa Barbaro at Maser was built by Palladio for two highly cultivated Venetian brothers and is wonderfully decorated with frescoes by Veronese.

Day 6. Originally a hunting lodge built in 1568, Villa Emo Capodilista is a grand edifice designed by Dario Varotari, a pupil of Veronese. Villa dei Vescovi at Luvigliano is an early 16th-century arcaded villa formerly used as a Summer retreat for the bishops of Padova. The afternoon is free in Vicenza.

Day 7. The supremely elegant Villa Cornaro at Piombino Dese has a two-storey portico, and the Villa Emo at Fanzolo beautifully combines the utilitarian and the noble. In the cathedral of Castelfranco is Giorgione's *Madonna Enthroned*.

Day 8. Pass several summer retreats of Venetian patricians beside the canal between Padua and the Lagoon. The Villa Foscari, 'La Malcontenta', is one of Palladio's best-known and most beautiful works. The flight from Venice arrives at Heathrow c. 2.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,150 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled flights with British Airways (Airbus 319); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to villas, etc; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £390. Price without flights £1,980.**

Hotel: a comfortable and hospitable 4-star hotel in the centre of Vicenza. Rooms vary in size and decoration.

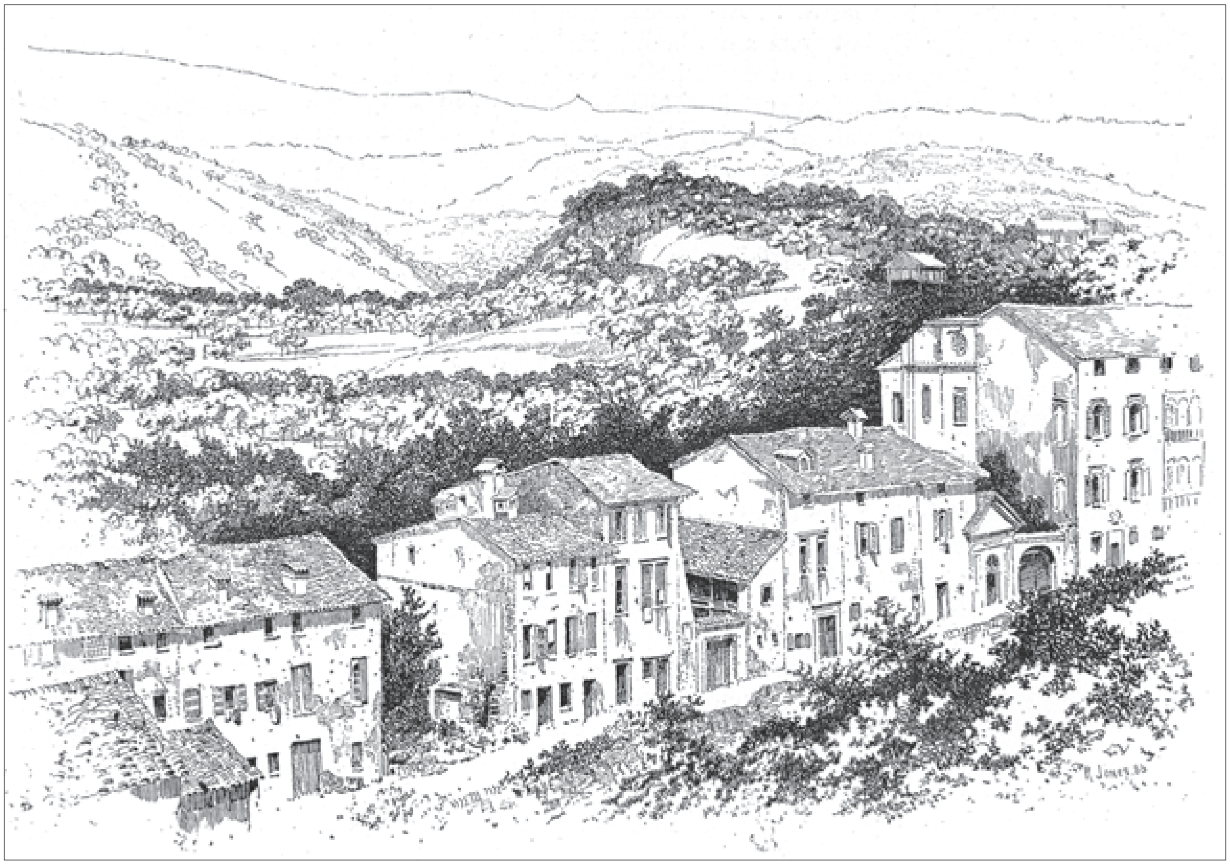
Please note: most of the villas on the itinerary are privately owned and many require special arrangement to visit. The selection and order of visits may vary from the description here.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking as the coach can rarely get close to the villas or enter town centres. The average distance by coach per day is 53 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

THE VENETO

SOME OF ITALY'S FINEST ART & ARCHITECTURE



Asolo, wood engraving from 'The Magazine of Art' 1887.

16–23 April 2012 (MY 216)
8 days • £2,060
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Verona, Vicenza, Padua, Treviso, Asolo, Bassano and several other places in the region.

Mediaeval frescoes (Giotto), Renaissance paintings (Titian), 18th-century interiors (Tiepolo), Neo-Classical sculpture (Canova).

Romanesque churches, Gothic castles, Palladian villas.

For centuries the Veneto formed the heartland of Venice's terra ferma empire, stretching from the Adriatic to Lake Garda, and from the plain of the Po to the foothills of the Dolomites.

But it would be quite wrong to consider the Veneto merely as an appendage to La Serenissima, culturally or politically. The region is too large and varied for such relegation – and has a history which is far longer than that of the maritime republic.

While more and more of the countryside is regrettably soaked up by urban and industrial development, many of the most illustrious and art-historically important cities in Italy are situated in the Veneto. So also are some of the country's loveliest smaller towns, often with their mediaeval circuit of walls still intact.

In the fields of painting and sculpture, the Trecento is particularly well represented, with Giotto's finest fresco cycle heading the list. From the fifteenth century are masterpieces by Pisanello, Donatello, Mantegna and Bellini; great paintings by Giorgione, Veronese and Tiepolo, inter alia, represent later centuries. The architecture ranges from Roman through Romanesque to Gothic, and on to Renaissance and Neo-Classical.

A recurring theme is the genius of Andrea Palladio. To this one man is owed the appearance of most of the villas in the countryside, and indeed of much of eighteenth-century England, for he became the most internationally influential of all Italian architects. Work by another Italian architect also makes repeated appearances: Carlo Scarpa created some of the most affecting designs of the twentieth century, blending old with new.

Itinerary

Day 1: Verona. Fly at c. 9.45am from London Heathrow to Venice. Drive to Vicenza, where all seven nights are spent.

Day 2: Treviso, Maser, Villa Malcontenta. Once an important fortress city, Treviso has a fine historic centre with many painted façades. The cathedral has a Titian, and the chapter house of St Nicholas has extraordinary 14th-cent. frescoes of learned monks. At Maser, the Villa Barbaro by Palladio has frescoes by Veronese. 'La Malcontenta', beside the Brenta, is one of Palladio's best-known and most beautiful villas.

Day 3: Vicenza, La Rotonda, Villa Valmarana. Vicenza is the lovely town where Andrea Palladio spent most of his life. Visit Palladio's theatre (Teatro Olimpico), town hall (Basilica) and several of his palaces, one of which (Chiericati) houses an art gallery. On a hill just outside the city is 'La Rotonda', the most famous of all Palladian villas. The 18th-century Villa Valmarana 'ai Nani' has frescoes by the Tiepolos, father and son.

Day 4: Villa Pisani, Castelfranco, Villa Cornaro, Villa Emo. The imposing 18th-century Villa Pisani at Stra has a ceiling fresco by Tiepolo in the ballroom. In the cathedral of Castelfranco is Giorgione's *Madonna Enthroned*. Two great buildings by Palladio follow in the afternoon: the Villa Cornaro at Piombino Dese and the Villa Emo at Fanzolo of beguiling simplicity. Some of these villas are in private ownership and visits are by special arrangement.

Day 5: Asolo, San Vito. Visit the delightful little town of Asolo, with a Lotto altarpiece in the cathedral, and the Brion cemetery complex at San Vito by Carlo Scarpa. There is some free time in Vicenza.

Day 6: Bassano, Possagno. At Possagno see the house of the Neo-Classical sculptor Canova with a museum of casts and mausoleum. Bassano del Grappa is a highly attractive town in the foothills of the Dolomites, with a series of picturesque squares with painted façades, a wooden bridge by Palladio and an art gallery with paintings by the 16th-century Bassano family.

Day 7: Padua. Giotto's fresco cycle in the Arena Chapel is one of the greatest achievements in the history of art and marks the beginning of the modern era in painting. Other marvellous 14th-century frescoes are those in the Baptistry by Giusto de' Menabuoi. The mediaeval town hall and surrounding squares are among the finest of such ensembles in Italy. The vast multi-domed Basilica of St Anthony contains many works of art. The Renaissance is represented by the remains of frescoes by Mantegna and Donatello's bronze equestrian statue, *Gattamelata*.

Day 8: Verona. A major Roman settlement, the amphitheatre is one of the largest and best preserved. At the heart of the city are interconnecting squares with magnificent mediaeval palazzi. The vast Gothic church of Sant'Anastasia has a fresco by Pisanello. San Zeno is a splendid Romanesque church with an altarpiece by Mantegna. The flight arrives at Gatwick at c. 8.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,060 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 319); private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £390. Price without flights £1,920.**

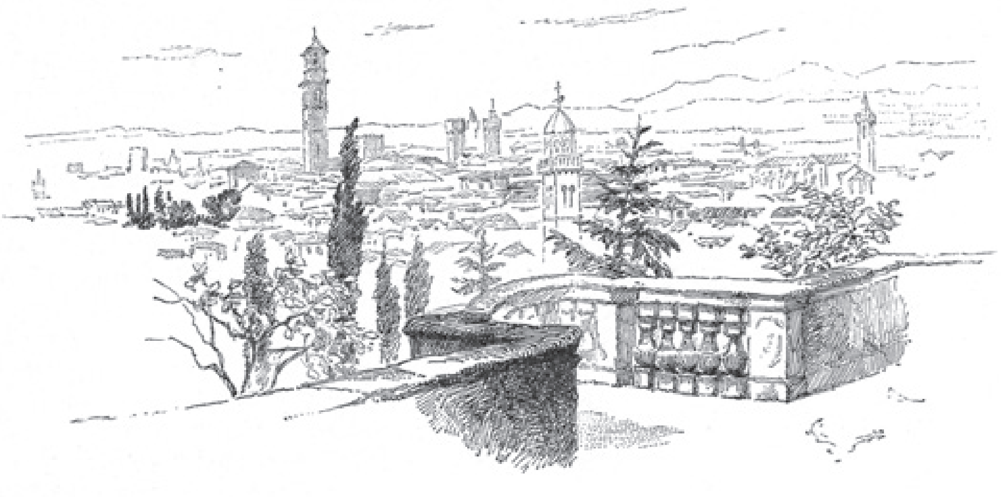
Hotel: all seven nights are spent in Vicenza. Although not luxurious, the 4-star hotel is well located, comfortable and has helpful, friendly staff.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of coach travel and walking, sometimes on uneven ground. The average distance by coach per day is 57 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

VERONA OPERA

LYRIC SPECTACLE IN THE VENETO



Verona from the Giusti Gardens, wood engraving 1887.

5–9 July 2012 (MY 304)
Don Giovanni • Romeo & Juliet • Aida
Lecturer: Clare Ford-Wille

2–6 August 2012 (MY 324)
Carmen • Turandot • Aida
Lecturer: Dr Roberto Cobianchi

23–27 August 2012 (MY 344)
Carmen • Tosca • Aida
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

All departures: 5 days • £1,950

In the setting of a Roman amphitheatre, the most famous of open-air festivals.

Each tour is accompanied by an art historian who lead walks and visits during the day.

Stay in a hotel close to the amphitheatre.

The first magic moment comes well before the conductor raises his baton. Unless you have led a team on to the pitch at Wembley, or won the New Hampshire primaries, you are unlikely to have experienced anything quite like the wall of heady high spirits which hits you as you emerge from the entrance tunnel into the arena.

Filling the vast ellipse of the nineteen-hundred-year old Roman amphitheatre are fourteen thousand happy people, bubbling with joyous expectation of the spectacle which is to follow. Even the most dour of dusty-hearted opera purists cannot help but be uplifted.

Then the floodlights go down, the chaotic chatter quietens to a reverential whisper, and the enveloping dusk is pierced only by flickering candle flames as uncountable as the stars above. Magic again; for these special moments the Verona Festival remains without rival.

The list of unique assets continues. There is the inestimable advantage of the stage and auditorium, one of the largest of ancient amphitheatres which, though built for rather less refined spectacles ('arena' is Latin for sand, used in quantity after the slaughter of animals and gladiators) provides miraculously sympathetic acoustics. The elliptical form also seems to instil a sense which can best be described as resembling an embrace, bonding the audience however distant or disparate the individual members might be.

Then there is the benefit of being at the heart of one of the most beautiful of Italian cities. Verona is crammed with magnificent architecture and dazzlingly picturesque streets and squares. Surprisingly, the city seems scarcely deflected from a typically Italian dedication to living well and stylishly by the annual influx of festival visitors.

Enough of the spectacle, what of the music? Most performances reach high standards, with patches of stunning singing. For the (largely Italian) casts, to perform at Verona is still a special event, and there remains as an incentive to excellence the typically Italian expression of audience disapproval, instant and merciless. Besides, the younger singers know that they will be judged by more agents, casting directors and peers in one performance than usually would see them in a season.

Opinions vary concerning the best place to sit. All the seats we have booked are numbered and reserved (no queuing for hours and elbowing to seize the best of what remains), and a proportion are *poltronissime*, cushioned stalls seats, which we offer for a supplement. The rest are on the lowest tiers, the *prime gradinate*, with clear sight lines, while plastic seating is mercifully interposed between you and the marble.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty confronting anyone wanting to attend the festival is finding somewhere to stay; hotels up to two hours' drive away can be full of opera goers. We stay just five minutes walk from the arena in the centre of Verona.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 4.00pm from London Gatwick to Verona. Overnight Verona where all four nights are spent.

Day 2. Take an introductory walk in Verona, passing through the beautiful streets and squares at the heart of the city. Visit the church of Sant'Anastasia with its Pisanello frescoes, and the spectacular mediaeval tombs of the ruling della Scala family. The afternoon is free; evening opera in the Arena.

Day 3. A walk leads to the Romanesque cathedral, across the River Adige to the well-preserved Roman theatre. Lunch is at a privately owned villa in the countryside (by special arrangement). There is some free time; evening opera in the Arena.

Day 4. The morning walk includes the Castelvecchio, a graceful mediaeval castle and fortified bridge, now housing an art museum. Alternatively, there are bus and train services offering the opportunity to see more of the region, perhaps Lake Garda or Venice. The afternoon is free or take an optional visit to the church of S. Zeno, a major Romanesque church with sculpted portal and a Mantegna altarpiece, and the Gothic church of S. Fermo Maggiore; evening opera in the Arena.

Day 5. Fly from Verona, arriving London Gatwick at about 1.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,950 (deposit £200). This includes: 3 opera tickets costing c. £260; air travel (economy class) with scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 737); accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and three dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; tips for waiters, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Supplement for *poltronissime* seats £240**. **Single supplement £370** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £1,810.**

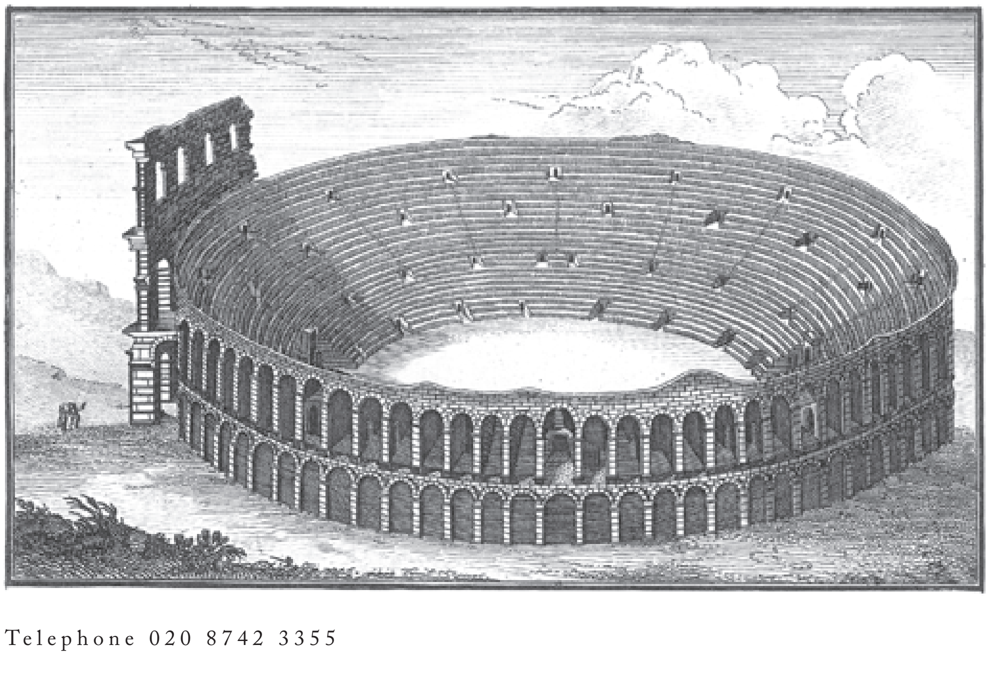
Lecturers: these tours are accompanied by an art historian who leads walks around Verona. There are no specialised talks on the operas.

Hotel: a friendly 3-star a short walk from the Arena in a quiet street. The rooms have been recently renovated and are a good size. All have air-conditioning and some have baths.

How strenuous? To participate fully in the itinerary, a fair amount of walking is involved. Average distance by coach per day: 18 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Verona arena, engraving c. 1760.



THE VENETIAN HILLS

13–18 October 2011 (MY 988)
6 days • £1,790
Lecturer: Clare Ford-Wille

Ask us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

Ravishingly beautiful landscapes from vine-clad foothills to the peaks of the Dolomites.

Altarpieces and frescoes by Venetian masters, mediaeval to Rococo.

Good hotel in a little hill town.

'Hills' and 'Venice' are not accustomed to finding themselves in the same sentence; sited on (and sometimes under) an estuarial lagoon, elevation above (or below) sea level in Venice is measured in centimetres. But on a clear day a range of hills can be seen rising to the north. On a very clear day the snowy peaks of the Dolomites come into view.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages the proud little communities which populated these hills one by one submitted to the rule of La Serenissima, as did much of northern Italy. Political hegemony was followed by cultural influence, clearly manifested still in the disorientating sight of Venetian-style Renaissance palazzi set against precipitous pine-clad hillsides.

But the cultural forces did not flow only in one direction. As is often the case with an artistically flourishing metropolis, many of the creators were outsiders. Titian was born in the rugged Cadore mountains, Cima from the gentler hillside town of Conegliano, Marco Ricci from hilltop Belluno, Il Pordenone from the town on the plain from which he took his name. These and many other artists enjoyed successful careers in Venice, but most kept in contact with their natal towns, accepting commissions for, or donating paintings to, their parish church.

These hill towns are among the loveliest in Italy, and they are set in ravishing landscapes which range from vine-clad foothills to soaring limestone peaks. Most of them are quite small, but the architectural ambitions of their inhabitants were otherwise: the historic centres are dense with fine buildings and arcaded streets which give protection from mountain downpours and summer sun.

The ostensible theme of this tour is painting of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but other aspects of the art and history of the region will not be ignored. The base is Follina, a tiny community which grew up around a monastery in the mountains.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

THE ART HISTORY OF VENICE

PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE

21–27 November 2011 (MY 121)
7 days • £2,020
Lecturer: Polly Buston

16–22 March 2012 (MY 181)
7 days • £2,260
Lecturer: Polly Buston

Wide-ranging survey of art and architecture with an emphasis on the Renaissance.

Private after-hours visit to San Marco.

Avoids the crowds of busier months and has a lower maximum number than most of our tours.

For the world's most beautiful city, Venice had an inauspicious start. The site was once merely a collection of mudbanks, and the first settlers came as refugees fleeing the barbarian destroyers of the Roman Empire. They sought to escape to terrain so inhospitable that no foe would follow.

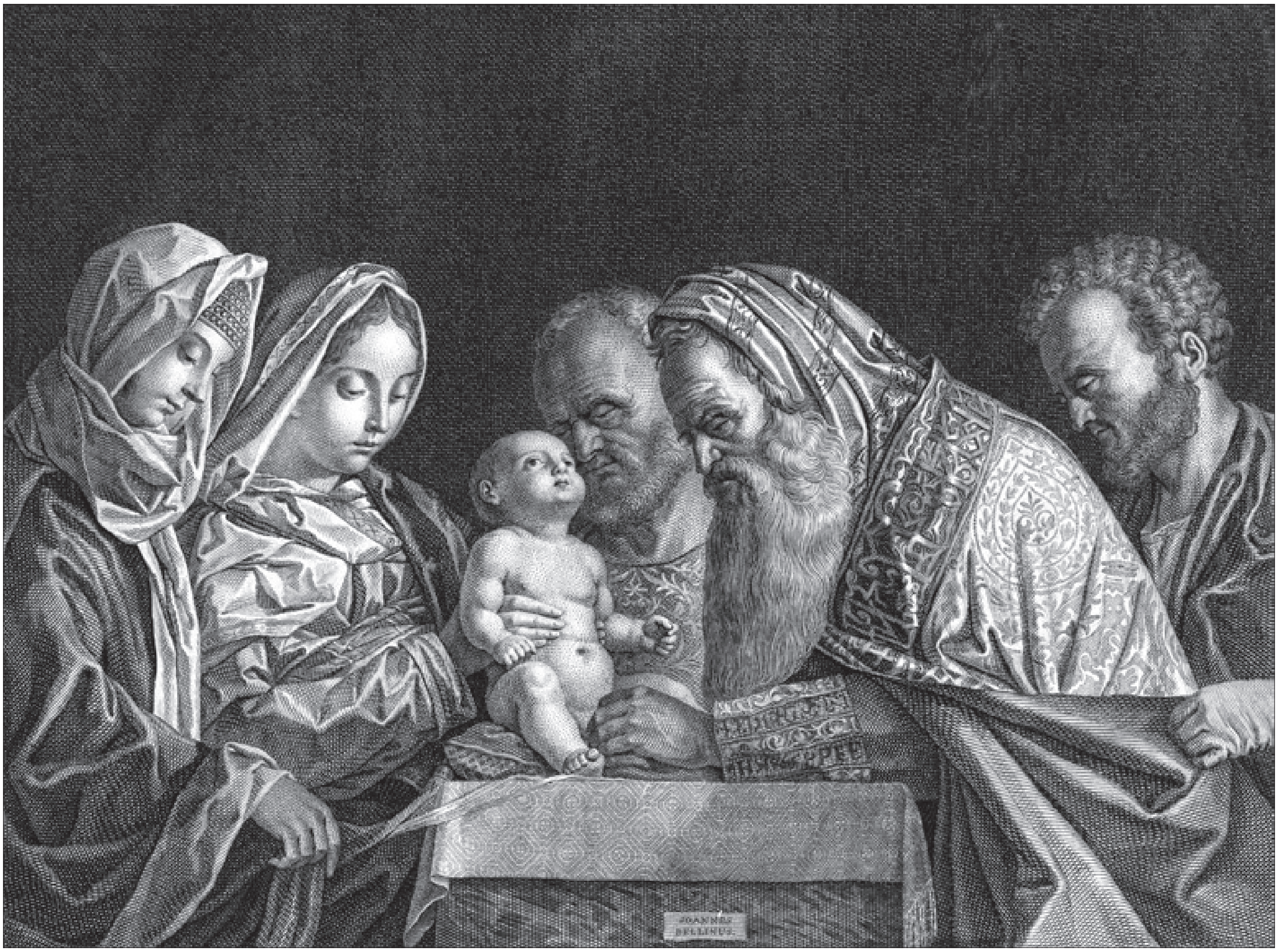
The success of the community which arose on the site would have been beyond the wildest imaginings of the first Venetians. By the end of the Middle Ages Venice had become the leading maritime power in the Mediterranean and possibly the wealthiest city in Europe. The shallow waters of the lagoon had indeed kept her safe from malign incursions and she kept her independence until the end of the eighteenth century. 'Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee, and was the safeguard of the west, Venice, eldest child of liberty.'

Trade with the East was the source of that wealth and power, and the eastern connection has left its indelible stamp upon Venetian art and architecture. Western styles are here tempered by a richness of effect and delicacy of pattern which is redolent of oriental opulence. It is above all by its colour that Venetian painting is distinguished. And whether sonorous or poetic, from Bellini through Titian to Tiepolo, there remain echoes of the transcendental splendour of the Byzantine mosaics of St Mark's.

That Venice survives so comprehensively from the days of its greatness, so little ruffled by modern intrusions, would suffice to make it the goal of everyone who is curious about the man-made world. Thoroughfares being water and cars nonexistent, the imagination traverses the centuries with ease. And while picturesque qualities are all-pervasive – shimmering Istrian limestone, crumbling stucco, variegated brickwork, mournful vistas with exquisitely sculpted details – there are not half-a-dozen cities in the world which surpass Venice for the sheer number of major works of architecture, sculpture and painting.

Venice in winter has one overwhelming advantage over other seasons: fewer tourists.

The Circumcision, engraving c. 1720 after Bellini.



With most of the noisy, gaudy trappings of the tourist industry packed away, with the crush of trippers reduced to a trickle of art lovers, the beauties of the city are more readily appreciated, and the sense of her past greatness even more captivating.

There may be rain, there will probably be morning mists and it will be overcast for at least some of the time, but equally likely are days of unbroken sunshine and brilliant blue skies, with a wonderful clarity in the air.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.45am from London Heathrow to Venice. Cross the lagoon by *motoscafo* (water taxi) to the hotel. There is a late afternoon introductory walk.

Day 2. The morning walk includes S. Zaccaria and S. Giovanni in Bragora, two churches with outstanding Renaissance altarpieces by Vivarini, Bellini and Cima. The Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni has the wonderful cycle of painting by Carpaccio. In the afternoon, see the incomparably beautiful Doge's Palace with pink Gothic revetment and rich Renaissance interiors. In the evening there is a special after-hours private visit to the Basilica of S. Marco, an 11th-century Byzantine church enriched over the centuries with mosaics, sculpture and various precious objects.

Day 3. Cross the Grand Canal to the Dorsoduro district, location of the great Franciscan church of S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari which has outstanding artworks including Titian's *Assumption*, and the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, with dramatic paintings by Tintoretto. The Ca' Rezzonico is a magnificent palace on the Grand Canal, now a museum of 18th-century art.

Day 4. Cross the lagoon by vaporetto to the island of Torcello, once the rival of Venice but now scarcely inhabited. Virtually all that remains of the city is the magnificent Veneto-Byzantine baptistry and cathedral with its 12th-century mosaics. Continue to the pretty glass-making island of Murano. Back in Venice, see Titian's *St Lawrence* in the Gesuiti.

Day 5. The Accademia is Venice's major art gallery, where all the Venetian painters are well represented. In the afternoon visit the vast gothic church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, the early Renaissance S. Maria dei Miracoli with its multicoloured stone veneer, and S. Giovanni Crisostomo with its Bellini altarpiece.

Day 6. Back in Dorsoduro, visit the church of S. Sebastiano with decoration by Veronese, and the nearby Scuola Grande dei Carmini with fine ceiling paintings by Tiepolo. Visit a private palazzo (by special arrangement). In the afternoon cross the *bacino* to Palladio's beautiful island church of S. Giorgio Maggiore and then to the tranquil Giudecca to see his best church, Il Redentore.

Day 7. The morning is free. By *motoscafo* to Venice airport. The flights arrives at Heathrow c. 2.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,020 (2011), **£2,260** (2012) (deposit £250); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 319); travel between Venice Airport and hotel by water-taxi, some journeys within Venice by vaporetto; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 dinners and 1 lunch (2011) with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, galleries, etc.; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer; **single supplement £460** (2011), **£320** (2012) (double for sole occupancy); **price without flights and the private motoscafo transfer £1,890** (2011), **£2,120** (2012).

Hotel: an elegant and historic hotel on the Grand Canal, opposite the Salute. A former residence of Tiepolo, it is maintained to a high standard and has a good restaurant. Rooms are elegantly furnished and decorated.

How strenuous? A lot of walking along the flat and up and down bridges; standing around in museums and churches is also unavoidable.

Small group: between 8 and 18 participants.

VENICE REVISITED

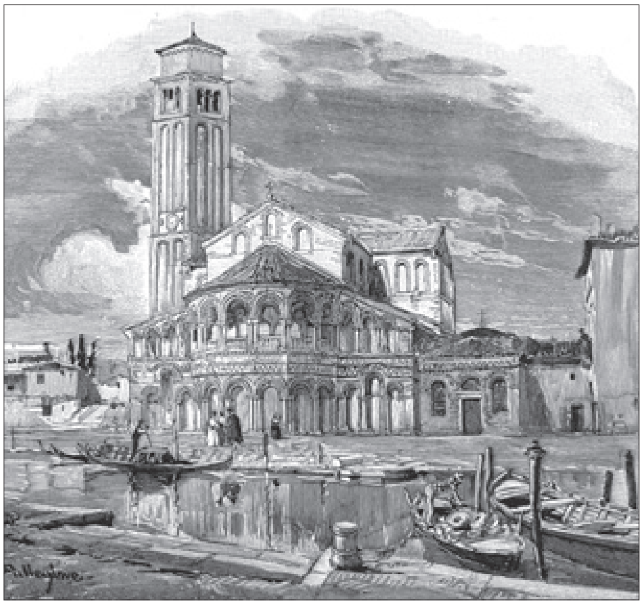
6–11 November 2012 (MZ 423)
6 days • £2,010
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

This is a tour for those who are familiar with the main buildings and museums of Venice and who now want to explore some of the lesser-known places. 'Lesser-known' does not imply less beautiful or interesting; the riches of Venice are so profuse that few visitors, even the most regular, have seen all that is worth seeing.

A glance at the list below will show that some of the places are by no means obscure, merely a little off the beaten track or difficult to get into. Others are indeed alluringly arcane. But perhaps the greatest attraction of the tour is that there will be several visits to places not generally open to the public. Some are private institutions, a couple are private homes, all are accessible only by special arrangement.

There is also free time in which to revisit places not included on the tour. We shall obtain information about any music there may be and endeavour to get tickets as requested.

Murano, SS. Maria e Donato, wood engraving c. 1890.



Because the tour is dependent on the kindness of many individuals and organisations, some of whom are reluctant to make arrangements far in advance, we do not give a detailed itinerary here but merely list most of the places we intend to take you to.

A special private visit to the Basilica of S. Marco, the finest Byzantine-style church in the West, the mosaic-encrusted interior illuminated exclusively for your benefit, an opportunity not only to see the church without crowds but also to visit chapels not normally open to the public.

Private palaces are a special feature: there will be visits to two or three family-owned palazzi with splendid 17th- and 18th-century interiors.

Church buildings visited include the little Romanesque cloister of Sant' Apollonia, Sansovino's S. Francesco della

Vigna with a façade by Palladio and altarpieces by Veronese, S. Giovanni in Bragora with a painting by Cima da Conegliano, the Gothic church of Madonna dell' Orto with paintings by Tintoretto and the island church of Il Redentore by Palladio.

Visit Murano the glass-making island to see SS. Maria e Donato with 12th-century mosaics, S. Pietro Martire with paintings by Bellini and Tintoretto and the glass museum.

Museums and picture collections visited include the Seminario Patriarcale, which has paintings from churches suppressed under Napoleon, and the Museo Correr which presents the history of Venice and has many fine pictures.

Walks off the beaten track include a special guided tour of the Ghetto and its synagogues, around the markets and former trading houses of the Rialto district and Cannareggio, a tranquil area of the city little known to visitors.

Among the religious foundations visited are the cloisters and conventual buildings of the island church of S. Giorgio Maggiore, the Scuola dei Carmini with paintings by Tiepolo and the Scuola Grande di S. Giovanni Evangelista with its grand Renaissance stairway and a magnificent hall.

Flights: fly at c. 9.45am from London Heathrow and return on Day 6 at c. 2.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,010 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); travel between Venice Airport and the centre by water taxi and some journeys within Venice by water bus; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums; all tips for drivers, restaurant staff, guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £390** (double for single occupancy). **Price without flights and *motoscafo* transfer £1,870**.

Hotel: an elegant and historic hotel on the Grand Canal, opposite the Salute. A former residence of Tiepolo, it is maintained to a high standard and has a good restaurant. Rooms are elegantly furnished and decorated.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking on this tour, particularly up and down bridges, and standing about in galleries, churches and in the streets.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 18 participants.

VENETIAN PALACES

1–5 November 2011 (MY 107)
This tour is currently full.

6–10 March 2012 (MY 176)
5 days • £1,980
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

13–17 November 2012 (MZ 428)
5 days • £1,980
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Explores many of the greatest and best-preserved of the palaces of La Serenissima.

Access to many buildings is by special arrangement, including some which are still in private hands, and a private after-hours visit to San Marco.

Stay in a converted palace on the Grand Canal, now a 4-star hotel.

Just as Venice possesses but a single 'Piazza' among dozens of campi, it has only one building correctly called a Palazzo. The singularity is important: the Doge's Palace (Palazzo Ducale), like the Piazza San Marco, was the locus of the Serenissima's public identity and seat of her republican government. Unlike her rivals in Florence and Milan she had no ruling dynasties to dictate polity, by contrast developing a deep aversion to individual aggrandizement and over-concentrated power. While the person and Palazzo of the Doge embodied their municipal identity, it was in their private houses that Venice's mercantile oligarchs expressed their own family wealth and status.

These *Case* (in Venetian parlance Ca') were built throughout the city. In the absence of primogeniture, many of the two hundred-odd noble families sprung many branches, leading to several edifices of the same name – an obstacle for would-be visitors.

These houses were unlike any other domestic buildings elsewhere in the world: erected over wooden piles driven into the mud flats of the lagoon, they remained remarkably uniform over the centuries in their basic design, combining the functions of mercantile emporium (ground level) and magnificent residence (upper floors).

They were however built in a fantastic variety of styles, Veneto-Byzantine, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo. Sometimes there is a touch of Islamic decoration. As new families bought their way into the aristocracy during the long period of the Republic's economic and political decline, they had their residences refurbished in Rococo splendour by master artists such as Giambattista Tiepolo. Many of these palaces have survived the virtual extinction of the Venetian aristocracy and retain their original, if faded, glory.

Palaces for nobles will be considered in conjunction with those for the non-noble *cittadino* (wealthy merchant) class and the housing projects for ordinary Venetian *popolani*, which rise cheek by jowl in the dense urban fabric.

Some of the places visited are familiar and readily accessible to the public. Others are opened only by special arrangement with the owners, whether a charitable organisation, branch of local government, or descendants of the original occupants. Some of these cannot be confirmed until nearer the time.

A private, after-hours visit to the Basilica San Marco, the mosaic interior illuminated for your benefit, is a highlight of this tour. As is an opportunity to see up close 'the most beautiful street in the world', the Grand Canal, from that most Venetian of vantage-points, a gondola.

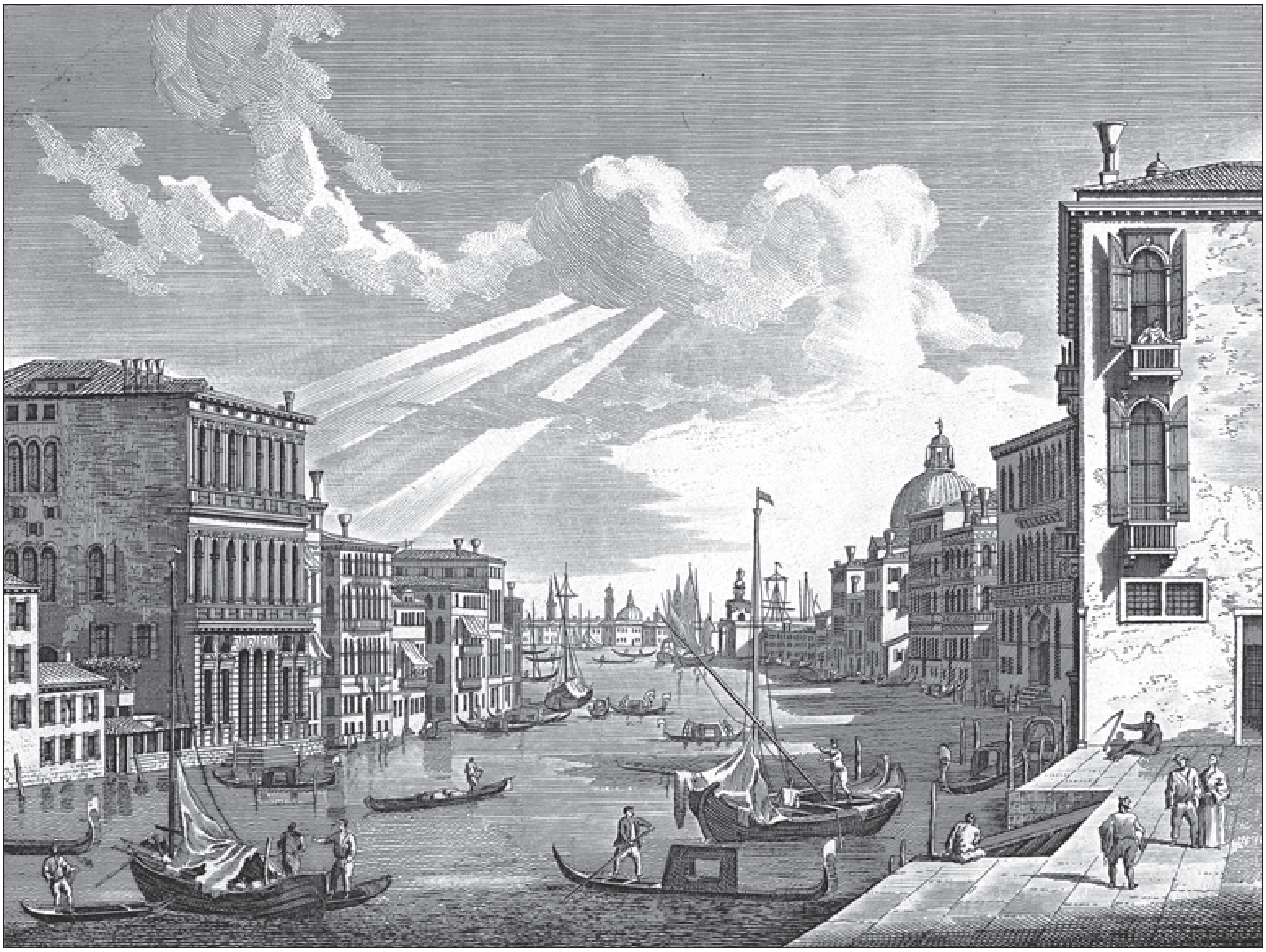
Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 8.45am from London Heathrow to Venice. Cross the lagoon by *motoscafo* (water taxi) and travel up the Grand Canal to the doors of the hotel. There is an introductory drink at the Palazzo Contarini dal Zaffo-Polignac (by special arrangement).

Day 2. Take a morning walk in Piazza San Marco. Visit the Palazzo Ducale, supremely beautiful with its 14th-century pink and white revetment outside, late Renaissance gilded halls and paintings by Tintoretto and Veronese inside. The former Casinò Venier (by special arrangement) is a uniquely Venetian establishment that was part private members' bar, part literary salon, part brothel. The Palazzo Grimani is a monumental edifice of the early 16th century by Sanmicheli. There is an after-hours private visit to the Basilica San Marco, an 11th-century Byzantine style church enriched over the centuries with mosaics, sculpture and various precious objects (by special arrangement).

Day 3. Designed by Longhena (c. 1667) and Giorgio Massari (c. 1751), the Ca' Rezzonico is perhaps the most magnificent of Grand Canal palaces, and contains frescoes by Tiepolo; it is now a museum of 18th-century art. Visit the grand ballroom of a nearby late 17th-century palace (by special arrangement). In the afternoon visit the Ca' Grande (16th-century, now publicly owned) and the Palazzetto Pisani, also 16th-century, and still owned by the descendants of the original occupants (both by special arrangement).

Day 4. Palazzo Pisani Moretta, on the Grand Canal, a Gothic palace with lavish 18th- and 19th-cent. interiors (by special



The Grand Canal, copper engraving c. 1760.

arrangement). With its elegant tracery and abundant ornamentation, the Ca' d'Oro, also on the Grand Canal, is the most gorgeous of Venetian Gothic palaces; it now houses the Galleria Franchetti. Cross the Grand Canal to the Ca' Pesaro, a splendid Baroque palace by Baldassare Longhena, now home to the Museum of Modern Art (Chagall, Kandinsky, Matisse). The 13th-century Fondaco dei Turchi is a unique survival from the era; today it is the natural history museum.

Day 5. The 17th-century Palazzo Albrizzi has some of the finest stucco decoration in Venice (by special arrangement). By *motoscafo* to Venice airport. The flight arrives at Heathrow c. 2.00pm.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £1,980 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 320); travel between Venice Airport and hotel by water-taxi, some journeys by vaporetto and one by gondola; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, porters; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £280** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights and the private *motoscafo* transfer £1,840.**

Hotel: a 4-star deluxe in a converted palace on the Grand Canal near Campo Sant'Angelo and the Rialto Bridge. The decoration is 18th-century Venetian style. Canal view rooms and suites are available on request. There is a small bar and lounge but no restaurant.

How strenuous? A lot of walking and crossing of bridges; standing around in museums and palaces is also unavoidable.

Small group: between 10 and 18 participants.

WRITERS' VENICE

JAMES, BYRON, BROWNING & OTHERS IN LA SERENISSIMA

24–28 October 2012 (MZ 410)
5 days • £1,760
Lecturer: Gregory Dowling

A new tour for 2012.

Great figures of English, American and Italian literature in Italy's most inspirational of cities.

Visit places they frequented and inhabited, which inspired them and which they described.

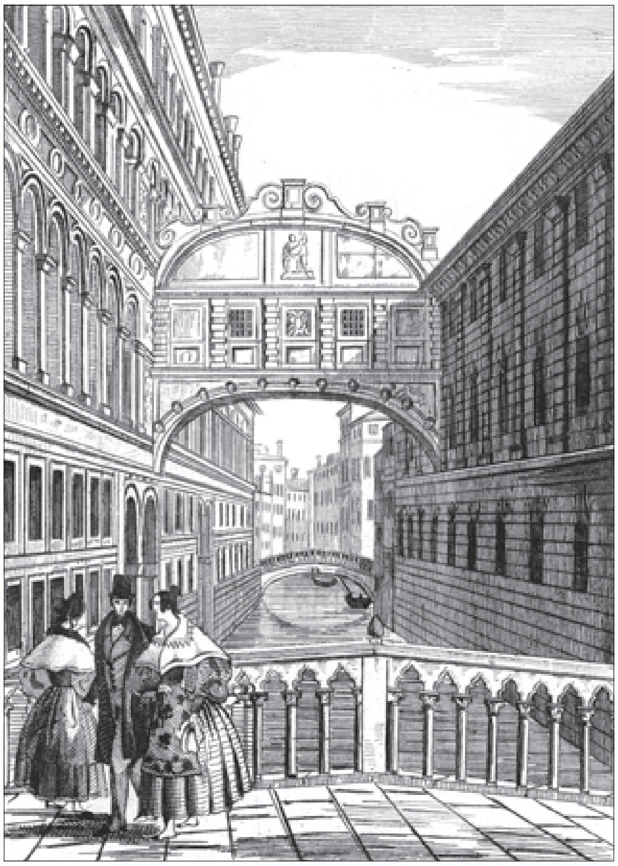
Led by a literary historian and by an actor who reads relevant passages in pertinent places.

Venice has been both the star and the stage of many of the world's finest writers and, from the early Renaissance, when the city became the richest trading power of the age, it has been a constant draw for the creative.

Though Venice has produced few outstanding writers of its own – Goldoni and Casanova are rare exceptions – the calibre of its admirers is beyond question. In the Renaissance, the great scholar Petrarch, the 'Father of Humanism', left the city his painstakingly collected library of classical works, while for those who knew it only by repute, like Shakespeare, it became a synonym for wealth, majesty and the frailty of mankind.

By the end of the seventeenth century, Venice's economy was in decline, but its reputation for indulgent pleasure was certainly not and well-born young men, completing their Grand Tour, considered it an essential item on their itinerary. For writers of the time, from Voltaire to Lord Byron, the city's fading splendours and decadent lifestyle were to become emblematic of the lapsed glories of ancient civilisations and the perils of hedonism.

Its aesthetic reputation was reborn in the nineteenth century, under Ruskin's admiring spotlight, and in his wake came Robert Browning and the great American realist Henry James. But the city as a catalyst for the imagination remains a constant. From Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* to Daphne Du Maurier's *Don't' Look Now*, from Ian McEwan's *The Comfort of Strangers* to Donna Leon's detective Brunetti, it has become an eternal archetype of beauty, melancholy and decay.



The Bridge of Sighs, engraving c. 1840.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 8.30am from London Heathrow to Venice. Cross the lagoon by *motoscafo* (water taxi) to the hotel. There is a late afternoon introductory walk to see 'The Bridge of Sighs', named by Byron, and Piazza San Marco.

Day 2. Walk along the Riva degli Schiavoni, passing the site of Petrarch's house, where he hosted Boccaccio, and the Pensione Wildner, where James wrote *Portrait of a Lady.* The Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni has the wonderful cycle of painting by Carpaccio, described by both Henry James and Ruskin In the afternoon visit the Ca' Rezzonico, a magnificent palace on the Grand Canal where Browning lived and died (it is now a museum of 18th-century art), and Goldoni's house close to the Rialto.

Day 3. Visit several Venetian palazzi this morning which hosted Lord Byron: the 16th-century Palazzo Mocenigo was his home from 1818 to 1819 (visit subject to confirmation); Palazzo Benson was once owned by the Querini family who hosted many of the great 19th-century literati; the 17th-century Palazzo Albrizzi has some of the finest stucco decoration in Venice (special arrangement). The Countess Albrizzi hosted Byron at many of her receptions. The afternoon is free.

Day 4. By vaporetto across the lagoon to the cemetery island of San Michele to see the graves of writers Ezra Pound and Joseph Brodsky. On the mainland, Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo was the setting for a scene of Byron's *Marino Faliero* and a crucial scene in James' *The Aspern Papers*. Nearby is Campo S. Maria Formosa, memorably described by Ruskin. Palazzo Grimani, a monumental edifice of the early 16th century by Sanmicheli, was visited by Byron among others. In 1816 Byron studied the lives and language of the monks of the Armenian monastery on the island of San Lazzaro.

Day 5. By *motoscafo* to Venice airport. The flight arrives at Heathrow at c. 2.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,760 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 319); travel between Venice Airport and hotel by water-taxi, some use of *vaporetto;* accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and reader. **Single supplement £340** (double for sole use). **Price without flights and *motoscafo* transfer £1,610.**

Hotel: an elegant and historic hotel on the Grand Canal, opposite the Salute. A former residence of Tiepolo, it is maintained to a high standard and has a good restaurant.

How strenuous? A lot of walking along the flat and up and down bridges; standing around in museums and churches is also unavoidable.

Small group: between 8 and 18 participants.

COURTS OF NORTHERN ITALY

22–29 April 2012 (MY 222)
8 days • £1,890
Lecturer: Dr Fabrizio Nevola

18–25 June 2012 (MY 278)
8 days • £1,890
Lecturer: Emma Rose Barber

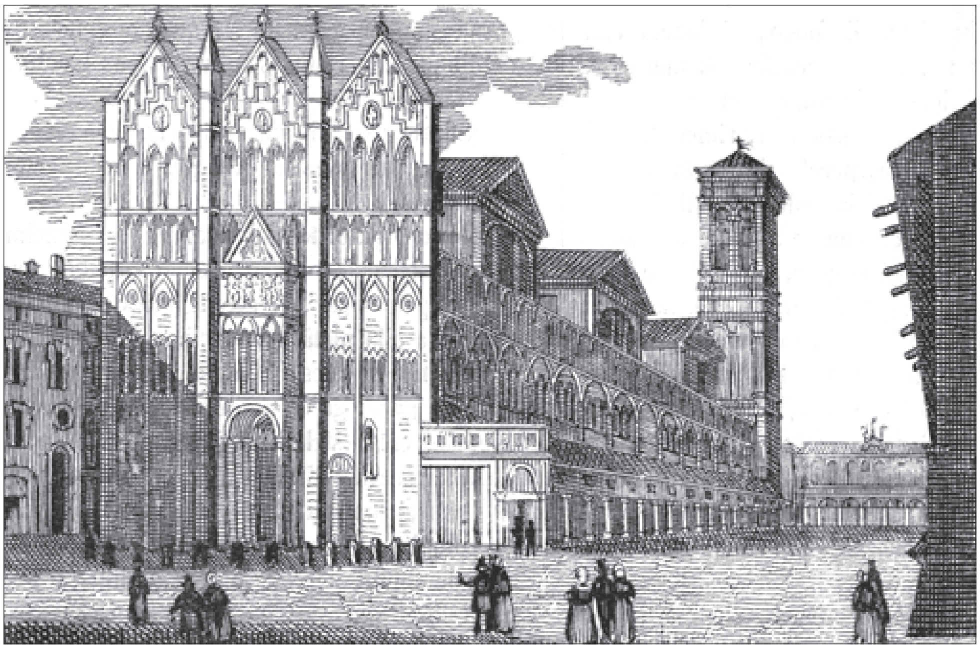
16–23 September 2012 (MZ 360)
8 days • £1,950
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Mantua, Ferrara, Parma, Ravenna, Urbino and surroundings.

Art and architecture of the Renaissance produced in the service of the ruling dynasties rather than for free cities.

Mediaeval and later art also features.

The subject of this tour is the art and architecture created through the patronage of the rulers of mediaeval and Renaissance Italy.



Ferrara Cathedral, engraving c. 1840.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, Italy gradually fragmented into numerous little territories. The city states became fiercely independent and were governed with some degree of democracy. But a debilitating violence all too often ensued as the leading families fought with fellow citizens for dominance of the city council and the offices of state. A common outcome from the fourteenth century onwards was the imposition of autocratic rule by a single prince, and the suspension of democratic structures: but such tyranny was not infrequently welcomed with relief and gratitude by a war-weary citizenry.

Their rule may have been tyrannical, and warfare their principal occupation, but the Montefeltro, Malatesta, d'Este and Gonzaga dynasties brought into being through their patronage some of the finest buildings and works of art of the Renaissance. Many of the leading artists in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy worked in the service of princely courts.

As for court art of earlier epochs, little survives, though a glimpse of the oriental splendour of the Byzantine court of Emperor Justinian can be had in the mosaic depiction of him, his wife and their retinue in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna. It is not until the fifteenth century, in Mantegna's Camera degli Sposi at Mantua, that we are again allowed an unhindered gaze into court life.

Itinerary

Day 1: Mantua. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Gatwick to Bologna. Drive to Mantua where the first four nights are spent. After lunch, visit the Ducal Palace, a vast rambling complex, the aggregate of 300 years of extravagant patronage by the Gonzaga dynasty (Mantegna's frescoes in the Camera degli Sposi, Pisanello frescoes, Rubens altarpiece). First of four nights in Mantua.

Day 2: Mantua, Sabbioneta. In the morning visit Alberti's highly influential Early Renaissance church of Sant'Andrea, the Romanesque Rotonda of S. Lorenzo and Giulio Romano's High Renaissance cathedral. In the afternoon, drive to Sabbioneta, an ideal Renaissance city on an almost miniature scale, built for Vespasiano Gonzaga in the 1580s; visit the ducal palace, theatre and one of the world's first picture galleries.

Day 3: Parma, Fontanellato. Parma is a beautiful city; the vast Farnese Palace houses an art gallery (Correggio, Parmigianino, Holbein) and an important Renaissance theatre (first proscenium arch). Visit the splendid Romanesque cathedral and octagonal baptistery and see the illusionistic frescoes of tumultuous heavenly host by Correggio in Camera di S. Paolo. The moated 13th-century castle in Fontanellato has a fresco by Parmigianino.

Day 4: Mantua. After a free morning, an afternoon walk takes in Alberti's centrally-planned church of S. Sebastiano (exterior), and the houses that court artists Mantegna and Giulio Romano built for themselves. Palazzo Te, the Gonzaga summer residence and the major monument of Italian Mannerism, designed by and with lavish frescoes by Giulio Romano.

Day 5: Ferrara was the centre of the city-state ruled by the d'Este dynasty, whose court was one of the most lavish and cultured in Renaissance Italy. Pass the Castello Estense, moated 15th-century stronghold, and visit the mediaeval cathedral. The Palazzo Diamanti houses the art gallery. The Palazzo Schifanoia is an Este retreat with elaborate allegorical frescoes. First of three nights in Ravenna.

Day 6: Ravenna, Classe. The last capital of the western Roman Empire and subsequently capital of Ostrogothic and Byzantine Italy, Ravenna possesses the world's most glorious concentration of Early Christian and Byzantine mosaics. Visit the Mausoleum of Galla Placida, lined with 5th-century mosaics and the splendid centrally–planned church of S. Vitale with 6th-century mosaics of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora. S. Apollinare Nuovo, basilica with mosaic Procession of Martyrs. Drive to Classe, Ravenna's port, which was once one of the largest in the Roman world; virtually all that is left is the great Basilica of S. Apollinare.

Day 7: Urbino. Drive into the hills to Urbino, the beautiful little city of the Montefeltro dynasty. See the exquisite Gothic frescoes in the Oratorio di San Giovanni. In the afternoon, visit the Palazzo Ducale, a masterpiece of architecture and exquisite relief decoration, which grew over 30 years into the perfect Renaissance secular environment and the excellent picture collection in the palace (Piero, Raphael, Titian).

Day 8: Cesena, Rimini. The Biblioteca Malatestiana in Cesena contains over 300 valuable manuscripts and many incunabula in original presses. In Rimini visit the outstanding Tempio Malatestiano, designed by Leon Battista Alberti, which contains superb decoration by Agostino di Duccio and particularly fine sculptural detail. Fly from Bologna, arriving Gatwick at c. 8.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,890 (April & June), **£1,950** (Sept.) (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Boeing 737); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £220** (April & June), **£230** (Sept.). **Price without flights £1,750** (April & June), **£1,810** (Sept.).

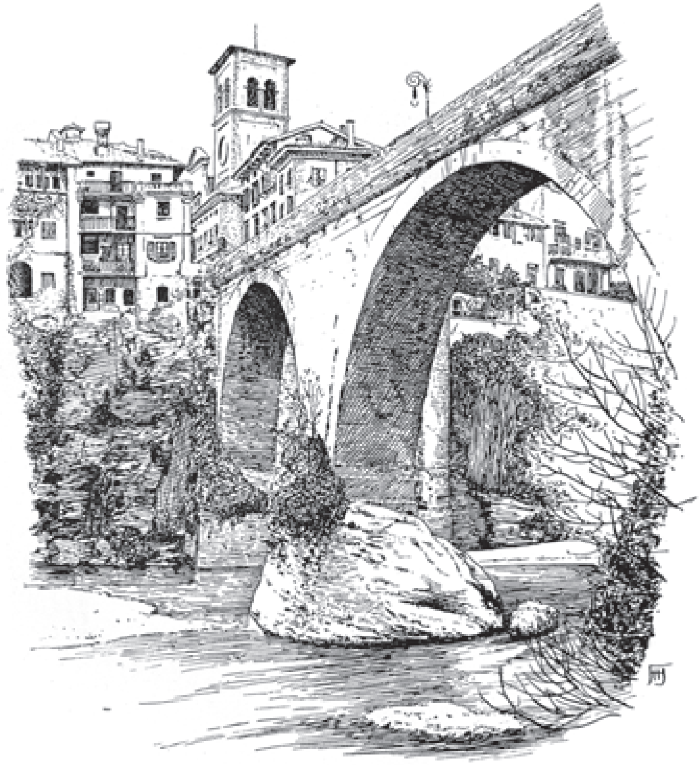
Hotels: Mantua (4 nights): a 4-star hotel a short walk from the historic centre. The decor is minimalist but stylish. Ravenna (3 nights): a bland modern façade hides a small, welcoming 4-star hotel. The room decor is a little austere but comfortable. Dinners at a selection of restaurants.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking: coaches are not allowed into historic centres. The average distance by coach per day is 88 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

DARK AGE BRILLIANCE

LATE ANTIQUE & PRE-ROMANESQUE



Cividale, engraving 1906 from 'Shores of the Adriatic, The Italian Side'.

16–23 October 2011 (MY 992)
8 days • £1,840
Lecturer: John McNeill

14–21 October 2012 (MZ 400)
8 days • £1,880
Lecturer: John McNeill

A journey through north-east Italy to Croatia, via Ravenna, Torcello, Cividale.

Includes some of the finest art and architecture of the Early Middle Ages to be found anywhere.

Byzantine mosaics are a particular feature.

It is now commonplace to believe, contrary to the assumptions of centuries, that the Dark Ages which succeeded the glories of the Roman Empire were not so dark, and that the later history of the Empire was not so glorious. A concomitant reappraisal has led to the acceptance of Early Christian and Byzantine art not as a regression to primitivism – an aspect of the decline and fall – but as one of the most brilliant chapters in the history of Western art.

But it remains true that in the territories of the Western Empire from the fifth to the ninth century there was little in the way of monumental building or large-scale artistic production. Only in a few dispersed pockets was the flame of ambitious artistic and intellectual endeavour kept alive.

A string of such pockets gathered around the northern end of the Adriatic and north-east Italy, the last redoubt of the Empire in the West. Born of an Umbrian past and raised in Imperial retreat, Ravenna remains anchored in the Adriatic marshes, humbled by the rise of her great neighbours, Bologna and Venice, and unhindered by later political commerce. The effect of this marginal status has been to spare her Early Christian buildings and leave a Byzantine heritage of unique range and richness. Given the intensity with which Ravenna developed between 402, when Honorius chose it as his capital, and 751, when the last of the Exarchs returned to Constantinople, it makes a fitting introduction to Early Christian and early mediaeval culture in north-eastern Italy.

Arising from the need to cater for the spiritual requirements of newly-emancipated Christianity, the clarity and humanism of the classical tradition were superseded by images and decoration designed to instil a kind of sacred dread, and to intimate the glories of the world to come. Mosaic was the key element in creating church interiors of awesome splendour and intense spirituality.

Early Christian forms were endorsed throughout the whole of the Adriatic seaboard, and the second half of the tour will embrace Aquileia, Grado, Porec (Parenzo) in Croatia and Concordia Sagittaria. The theme is rounded off with the astonishing little eighth-century church in Cividale in the foothills of the Julian Alps which preserves the earliest monumental sculpture of the Middle Ages.

Itinerary

Day 1: fly at 1.00pm from Gatwick to Bologna. Drive to Ravenna for the first of three nights.

Day 2: Ravenna. Begin with an exploration of the 5th-century forms at the cathedral and Orthodox Baptistery, and the superlative 6th-century ivory throne of Maximian in the Museo Arcivescovile. In the afternoon study Arian Ravenna at the Arian Baptistery and Theodoric's great Palatine church of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo. Investigate the 5th-century basilica design which provided Theodoric's court with its most immediate models, Galla Placidia's splendid ex-voto basilica of S. Giovanni Evangelista and Bishop Neon's San Francesco. Overnight Ravenna.

Day 3: Ravenna. The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia is the earliest Christian structure in Europe to retain its mosaic decoration in its entirety. The church of S. Vitale is the greatest 6th-century building of the West; the invention with which form, colour, space and narrative meaning are combined is breathtaking. This is followed by the collections of the Museo Nazionale, which complement Ravenna's buildings. Travel by coach to Theodoric's superb Mausoleum and to the ancient port of Classe for the great 6th-century basilica of Sant'Apollinare. Overnight Ravenna.

Day 4: Pomposa, Concordia Sagittaria. Drive north to the Po delta. Pomposa is an important 8th-century Benedictine abbey, richly extended by Abbot Guido's magnificent 11th-century porch and campanile. Lunch in Chioggia. The Roman road station at Concordia Sagittaria, whose modest mediaeval cathedral was built alongside a 4th-century basilica and martyrium, is splendidly revealed through archaeological excavation. Overnight Cividale.

Day 5: Cividale. Although founded as Forum Julii in the 1st century BC, Cividale is best known to historians as the site of the earliest Longobard settlement in northern Italy, and most celebrated by art historians for the astonishing quality and quantity of the 8th-century work which has survived here. See the superb 'Tempietto' of Sta Maria in Valle, Longobardic work in the cathedral museum, and spectacular early mediaeval collections in the archaeological museum. Some free time. Overnight Cividale.

Day 6: Porec (Croatia). Drive south, cross Slovenia and enter the part of Croatia formerly known as Istria. The sole object of the excursion is to visit Porec (Parenzo), a longish journey justified by the existence of an unusually complete 6th-century cathedral complex: basilican church, baptistery, bishop's palace. The church proper was built above an earlier basilica c. 540 by Bishop Euphrasius, whose complete episcopal throne is set within an apse which, for once, has retained its full complement of furnishings and fittings. Overnight Cividale.

Day 7: Aquileia, Grado. Aquileia was a major Roman city whose influential cathedral was complete by 319. Sections of walls and mosaic pavements were preserved within the present 11th-century cathedral, a rather wonderful survival. The Longobard sack of 568 resulted in the removal of the see to the more defensible position on the coast at Grado, whose two great 6th-century churches, Sta Maria della Grazie and the cathedral, also have outstanding floor mosaics. Overnight Cividale.

Day 8: Torcello. Drive to the Adriatic and take a water taxi to the island of Torcello in the Venetian lagoon, a major city while Venice was little more than a fishing village. Visit the largely 11th-century cathedral of Sta Maria Assunta and adjacent Greek-cross reliquary church of Sta Fosca. Continue to Venice Airport. The flight returns to London Gatwick at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

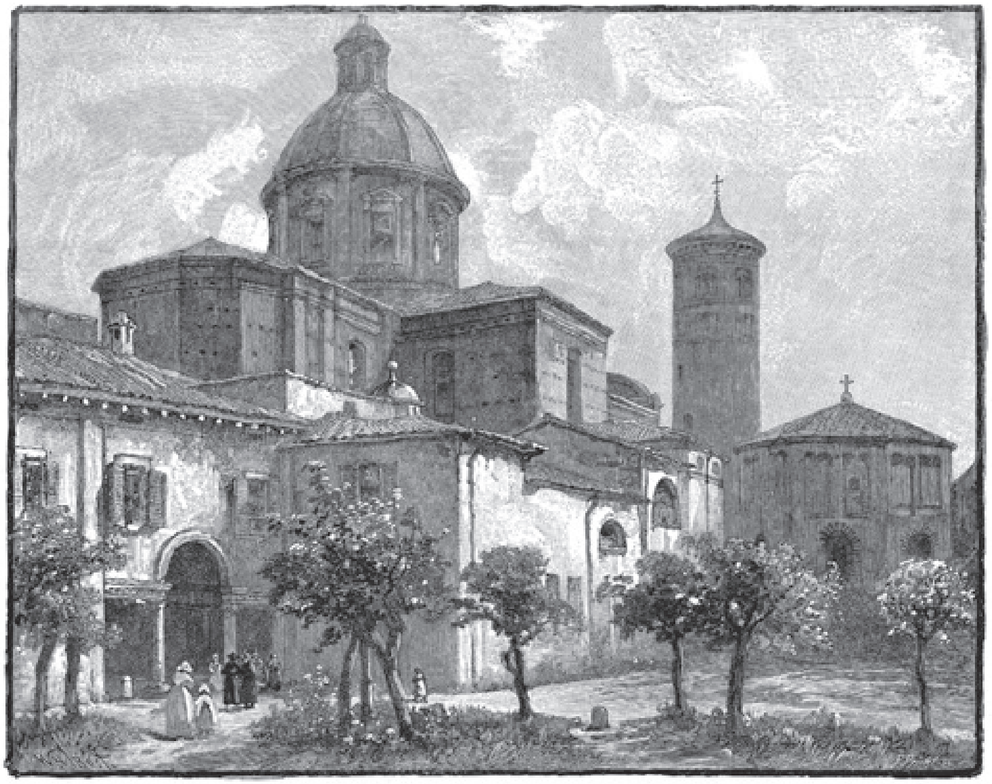
Price: £1,840 (2011), **£1,880** (2012) (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Boeing 737); travel by private coach throughout; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £195** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £1,730** (2011), **£1,760** (2012).

Hotels: Ravenna (3 nights): a bland modern façade hides a fairly basic but friendly and comfortable 4-star hotel. In Cividale (4 nights): a simple, functional and friendly 3-star, located in the centre. Dinners are at a selection of local restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking in town centres, some of it over uneven ground. Average distance by coach per day: 76 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Ravenna Cathedral and Baptistry, wood engraving 1891 from 'The Picturesque Mediterranean'.



RAVENNA & URBINO

BYZANTINE CAPITAL, RENAISSANCE COURT

5–9 October 2011 (MY 986)
This tour is currently full.

11–15 April 2012 (MY 207)
5 days • £1,350
Lecturer: Clare Ford-Wille

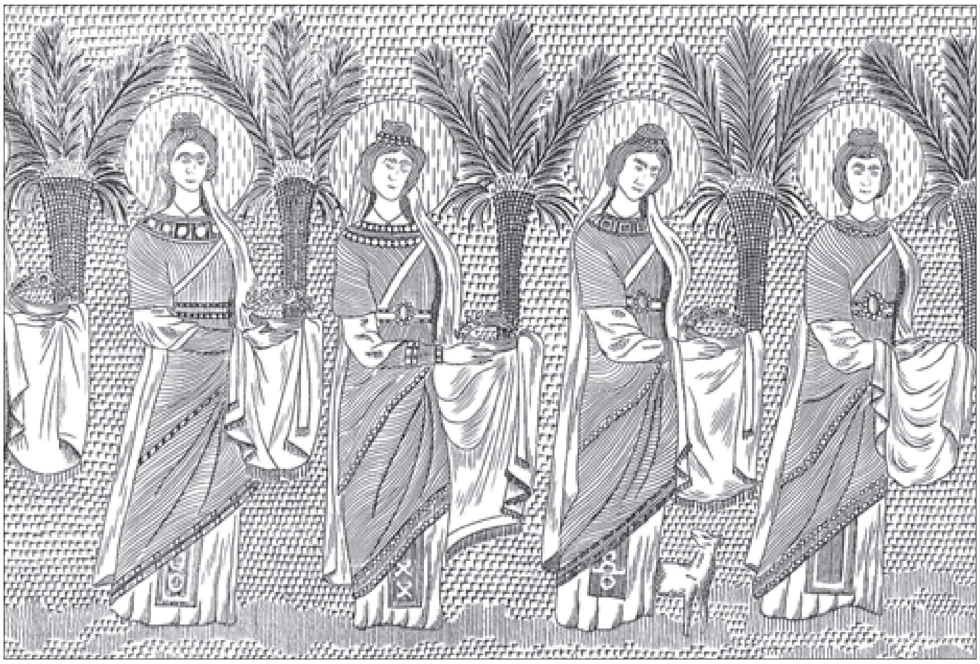
13–17 June 2012 (MY 271)
5 days • £1,350
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

3–7 October 2012 (MZ 387)
5 days • £1,350
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

The best Byzantine mosaics and the finest Renaissance palaces.

A Roman city on the plain by the sea and one of the loveliest hilltop towns in Italy.

Why combine them? Both are somewhat out of the way, yet close to each other.



Ravenna, mosaics in S. Apollinare.

Ravenna was once one of the most important cities in the western world. The last capital of the Roman Empire in the West, she subsequently became capital of the Gothic kingdoms of Italy and of Byzantine Italy. Then history passed her by. Marooned in obscurity, some of the greatest buildings and decorative schemes of the late antique and early mediaeval era were allowed to survive unmolested until the modern age recognised in them not the onset of decadence and the barbarity of the Dark Ages but an art of the highest aesthetic and spiritual power. The Early Christian and Byzantine mosaics at Ravenna are the finest in the world.

Urbino, by contrast, is a compact hilltop stronghold with a very different history and an influence on Renaissance culture out of all proportion to her size. The Ducal Palace, built by the Montefeltro dynasty over several decades, is perhaps the finest secular building of its period. Piero della Francesca, Raphael and Baldassare Castiglione were among those who passed through its exquisite halls.

The justification for joining in one short tour these two centres of diverse artistic traditions is simple. They are places to which every art lover wants to go but which are relatively inaccessible from the main art-historical centres of Italy, yet are close to each other. For many years this has been one of our most popular tours.

Itinerary

Day 1: Ravenna. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Gatwick to Bologna. Drive to Ravenna, where all four nights are spent.

Day 2: Ravenna. The so-called Mausoleum of Galla Placidia has the earliest mosaic scheme in Ravenna (mid-5th century, with 4th-century insertions). The National Museum is outstanding particularly for Byzantine ivory carvings. The Orthodox baptistry has superlative Early Christian mosaics. S. Apollinare Nuovo has a mosaic procession of martyrs marching along the nave. The centrally-planned church of S. Vitale is Ravenna's finest and has some of the most magnificent mosaics (including portraits of Emperor Justinian, Empress Theodora and their entourage).

Day 3: Ravenna. The Cathedral Museum possesses fine objects, including an ivory throne. Visit the Cooperativa Mosaicista, a laboratory for the restoration of mosaics (by appointment only and subject to confirmation) and the Mausoleum of Theodoric. The afternoon is free.

Day 4: Urbino. Drive to Urbino, one of Italy's finest hill towns. The Palazzo Ducale grew during 30 years of Montefeltro patronage into the perfect Early Renaissance secular environment, of the highest importance for both architecture and architectural sculpture. The picture collection in the palace includes works by Piero della Francesca, Raphael and Titian. There are exquisite International Gothic frescoes by Salimbeni in the Oratory of St John.

Day 5: Classe, Rimini. Drive to Classe, Ravenna's port, which was one of the largest in the Roman Empire. Virtually all that is left is the great basilica of S. Apollinare. Continue to Rimini and visit the Tempio Malatestiano, church and mausoleum of the Renaissance tyrant Sigismondo Malatesta (designed by Alberti, fresco by Piero della Francesca, sculpture by Agostino Duccio). Drive on to Bologna airport for a late afternoon flight arriving at Gatwick at c. 8.00pm.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £1,350 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 737); travel by private coach for transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners including wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, sites, etc; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £130** (double room for sole occupancy). **Price without flights £1,220.**

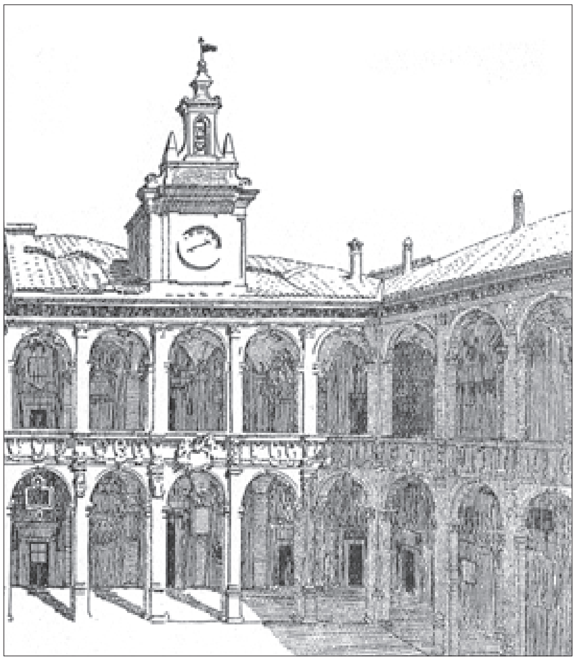
Hotel: a bland modern façade hides a somewhat basic but friendly and comfortable 4-star hotel. Decoration of its rooms is rather austere. Included dinners are at a selection of nearby restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking and standing in museums. The coach cannot be used within the town centres. The average distance by coach per day is 65 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

HISTORY OF MEDICINE

FLORENCE, BOLOGNA & PADUA IN THE AGE OF HUMANISM



Bologna University, engraving c. 1900 after Margarite Janes.

17–23 September 2012 (MZ 361)
7 days • £2,190
Lecturer: Professor Helen King

A new tour for 2012.

Fascinating early anatomical theatres, including the oldest in the world.

A selection of some of the best natural history, scientific and anatomical museums in Italy.

Based in two of the most beautiful central Italian cities, with time to explore both.

It is almost impossible to over-emphasise the leading role that Italy played in creating the civilization of the modern world.

Developments in the arts of painting, sculpture and architecture during the Italian Renaissance came to dominate the art of the western world until the beginning of the last century. Humanism, a range of intellectual endeavour which built on the achievements of the classical world, matured into the critical, liberal attitude which underlies current modes of thought and ideas about education. From patisserie to opera, boarding schools to astronomy, in countless areas of human endeavour and intellectual achievement a seminal Italian input can be traced.

In no field is the contribution of Italy greater than in the science of medicine. Bologna and Padua are homes to the oldest universities in Italy – indeed, in Europe – and their medical schools have for centuries made important contributions to the study of anatomy and the practice of surgery. Florence also has a good range of historical medical institutions, as well as the finest artistic patrimony of any city in the world.

This unique tour is accompanied by a leading historian of medicine, a tour manager and, in Padua, is joined by an art historian for an afternoon.

Itinerary

Day 1: Florence. Fly at 11.00am from London Gatwick to Pisa. After settling into the hotel, there is a special visit the Bigallo, a 14th-century orphanitropium. First of four nights in Florence.

Day 2: Florence. The Renaissance hospital of Santa Maria Nuova is where Leonardo studied anatomy through the dissection of cadavers. Nearby are the Ospedale degli Innocenti, a children's orphanage designed by Brunelleschi, and the Misericordia, an ambulance service of mediaeval origin, still operative. The Museo Galileo covers scientific studies from the Medici right through to current theory. In the afternoon, a special arrangement is made to see the Farmacia di Santa Maria Novella, the oldest pharmacy in the world.

Day 3: Florence. Casa Buonarotti, house of Michelangelo's family, has models revealing his unprecedented knowledge of anatomy. The Natural History Museum, 'La Speccola', also houses an excellent anatomical section. Lunch is at a restaurant on the Piazzale Michelangelo before a visit to San Miniato al Monte, the Romanesque abbey church with panoramic views of the city. The afternoon in Florence is free.

Day 4: Pisa. In the High Middle Ages Pisa was one of the most powerful maritime city-states in the Mediterranean, the rival of Venice and Genoa, deriving great wealth from its trade with the Levant. The 'Campo dei Miracoli' is a magnificent Romanesque ensemble of cathedral, monumental burial ground, campanile ('Leaning Tower') and baptistry. The 'Campo Santo', for centuries the burial place of the Pisan upper classes, was built using earth brought back from Golgotha during the crusades and has wonderful frescoes depicting death.

Day 5: Bologna. Leave Florence for Bologna. At the oldest university in Italy, see the Museum of Normal Human Anatomy and the Museum of Pathological Anatomy (by special arrangement), both of which have splendid wax models. The Archiginnasio has an eighteenth-century anatomical theatre and *écorché* figures by Lelli. First of two nights in Bologna.

Day 6: Padua. A full-day excursion to Padua, an important university city where Galileo once lectured. In the university itself (visited by special arrangement), items include Galileo's chair, William Harvey's emblem and, above all, the sixteenth-century Anatomical Theatre, the oldest in the world. The Palazzo Ragione has representations of early alchemy and medicine and Pietro D'Abano, founder of the medical school in 1222. An art historian joins us for the visit to Giotto's fresco cycle in the Arena chapel, one of the landmarks in the history of art, and the multi-domed Basilica of St Anthony which contains many great works of art.

Day 7: Bologna. The museum of mediaeval art is housed in a Renaissance palace, notable for tomb reliefs depicting university lectures of the period. Fly from Bologna, arriving Gatwick at c. 2.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,190 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 737); private coach for transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to museums, churches, etc.; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £350. Price without flights £1,980.**

Hotel: Florence (4 nights): a delightful, recently renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location. The rooms are stylishly decorated. Bologna (2 nights): an elegant 4-star hotel in the heart of Bologna, rooms vary in size and decor but are all classically furnished and comfortable. Dinners are at selected restaurants close to the hotels.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 16 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

LUCCA

ART & ARCHITECTURE IN NORTHERN TUSCANY

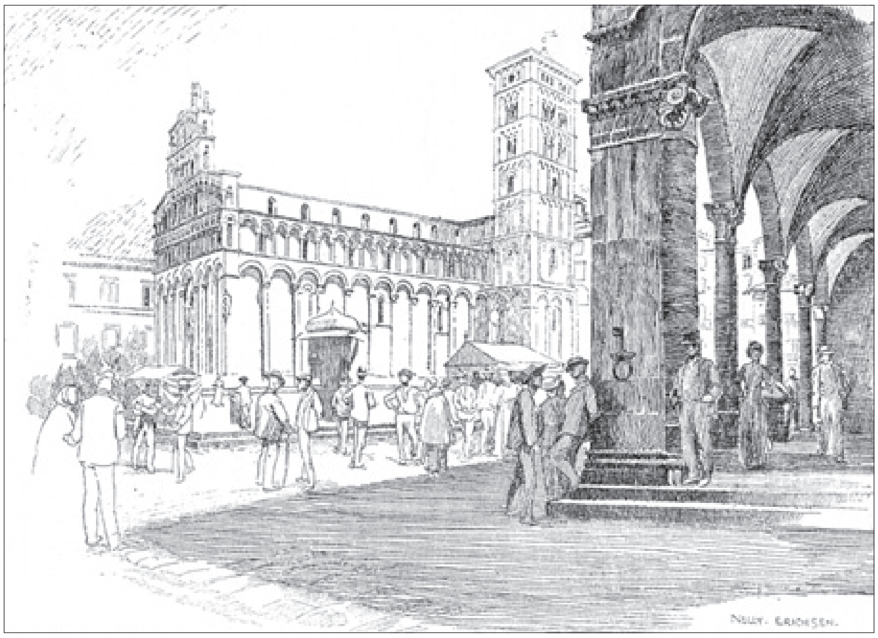
23–29 April 2012 (MY 223)
7 days • £1,920
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

10–16 September 2012 (MZ 353)
7 days • £1,920
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

Allows for leisurely exploration of one of the most beautiful and engaging of Tuscan cities.

Within magnificent ramparts, a treasury of sculpture, painting and architecture, Romanesque and Renaissance in particular.

Excursions to Prato, Pistoia, Pisa, Barga and a country villa.


NELLY. ERICHSEN.

Lucca, Piazza S. Michele, after a drawing by Nelly Erichsen in *Lucca* by Janet Ross.

Nowhere in Tuscany can claim to be undiscovered. Some places are more undiscovered than others, however, and for no good reason Lucca is one of the most underrated of ancient Tuscan cities. Many know of its exceptional attractions, but few allow themselves the opportunity of getting to know it properly. Only by staying for several nights, and by allowing time to absorb, observe and reflect can real familiarity develop – not only with its historic fabric and works of art but also with the rhythm of life of its current inhabitants. For Lucca is not a museum but an agreeable and vital lived-in town.

To the approaching visitor, Lucca immediately announces its distinctiveness and its historical importance, while at the same time secreting the true extent and glory of its built heritage. The perfectly preserved circumvallation of pink brick, ringed by the green sward of the grass glacis, is one of the most complete and formidable set of Renaissance ramparts in Italy.

Unlike many Tuscan cities, Lucca sits on the valley floor. This and the traces of the grid-like street pattern – albeit given a mediaeval inflection – betray its Roman origin. Within the walls, the city is a compelling masonry document of the Middle Ages. There is a superb collection of Romanesque churches with the distinctive Lucchese feature of tiers of arcades applied to the façades and flanks. There is good sculpture, too, including the exquisite tomb of Ilaria del Carretto, and some quite exceptional (and exceptionally early) panel paintings. Looming over the dense net of narrow streets are the imposing palazzi of the mercantile elite, including some grand ones from the age of Baroque.

The Romanesque theme of the tour will be continued on the excursions to the nearby cities of Prato, Pistoia and Pisa, where the style has its greatest manifestation in Tuscany in the ensemble of cathedral, baptistry and campanile (the now not-quite-so-leaning tower) at Pisa. Likewise mediaeval sculpture features prominently in all these places.

The Renaissance is represented by some of the best loved works of the Florentine masters – by Filippo Lippi and Donatello at Prato cathedral, for example, and by the della Robbia workshop in Pistoia. There are also visits to delightful little hill-top towns and to a country villa of the eighteenth century.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Gatwick to Pisa. Visit the Romanesque basilica of San Piero a Grado. Drive to Lucca.

Day 2: Lucca. Secure within a complete circuit of Renaissance ramparts is a network of mediaeval streets and squares echoing the Roman grid plan. Visit San Michele in Foro and the cathedral of San Martino, Romanesque churches with important sculptures (tomb of Ilaria del Carretto) and paintings, and Torre Guinigi. In the afternoon drive to the Villa Torrigiani which has a 19th-cent. landscaped garden with a sunken garden from the 1750s.

Day 3: Prato. Drive inland to Prato, a city that built its wealth on cloth-working. The mediaeval cathedral has outstanding Renaissance sculpture and painting, notably Donatello's pulpit with dancing putti and the Filippo Lippi frescoes, recently restored. Santa Maria delle Carceri is a rare example of an Early-Renaissance centrally-planned church. The Museo della Pittura Murale has good paintings by both Lippis, Lorenzo Monaco and Paolo Uccello.

Day 4: Barga, Lucca. Drive up through forested hills to Barga, a delightful little town with a fine Romanesque cathedral at its summit. The afternoon in Lucca is free.

Day 5: Pistoia. The exceptionally attractive town of Pistoia has important art and architecture. Buildings include the octagonal baptistry and the cathedral, both at one end of the main square, and the Renaissance hospital, Ospedale del Ceppo. Sculpture includes the pulpit in Sant'Andrea carved by Giovanni Pisano, one of the finest Gothic sculptures south of the Alps, a unique silver altarpiece in the cathedral, the product of 150 years' workmanship, and the coloured terracotta frieze by the della Robbia workshop on the Ospedale.

Day 6: Pisa. In the High Middle Ages Pisa was one of the most powerful maritime city-states in the Mediterranean, the rival of Venice and Genoa, deriving great wealth from its trade with the Levant—the 'Campo dei Miracoli' is a magnificent Romanesque ensemble of cathedral, monumental burial ground, campanile ('Leaning Tower') and baptistry, all of gleaming white marble. Among the major artworks here are the pulpit by Nicola Pisano (1260) and the 14th-century Triumph of Death fresco. There is an optional afternoon walk to the historic centre, followed by a drink in Lucca's Roman Amphitheatre before dinner.

Day 7: Lucca. Visit the Romanesque church of

San Ferdiano, one of the finest in Lucca, with façade mosaics and a chapel sculpted by Jacopo della Quercia. The Villa Guinigi, a rare survival of a 14th-century suburban villa, is now a museum with outstanding mediaeval panel paintings. The flight from Pisa arrives London Gatwick at c. 4.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,920 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) with scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 737); travel by private coach for transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, galleries, etc, visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £240** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £1,820.**

Hotel: an excellently situated 4-star, within the city walls of Lucca. The staff are helpful and friendly. Dinners are at selected restaurants outside the hotel.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, much of it on roughly paved streets. The tour is not suitable for anyone with any difficulties with everyday walking and stair climbing. The average distance by coach per day is 41 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

Torre del Lago

July or August 2012
Details available autumn 2011
Contact us to register your interest.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

A Festival of Music in Florence

23–29 October 2011 (MY 990)
7 days • 10 concerts
Prices from £3,200

Florence is the location of one of the latest in our long-established series of festivals which place music in appropriate historic settings. Universally known as the crucible of change in the field of the visual arts, 'the cradle of the Renaissance' was also a highly important centre for the development of music, from the end of the Middle Ages until the Age of Baroque. Throughout that period and beyond, Florence's huge cultural and political prestige attracted musicians of the first rank from all over Europe.

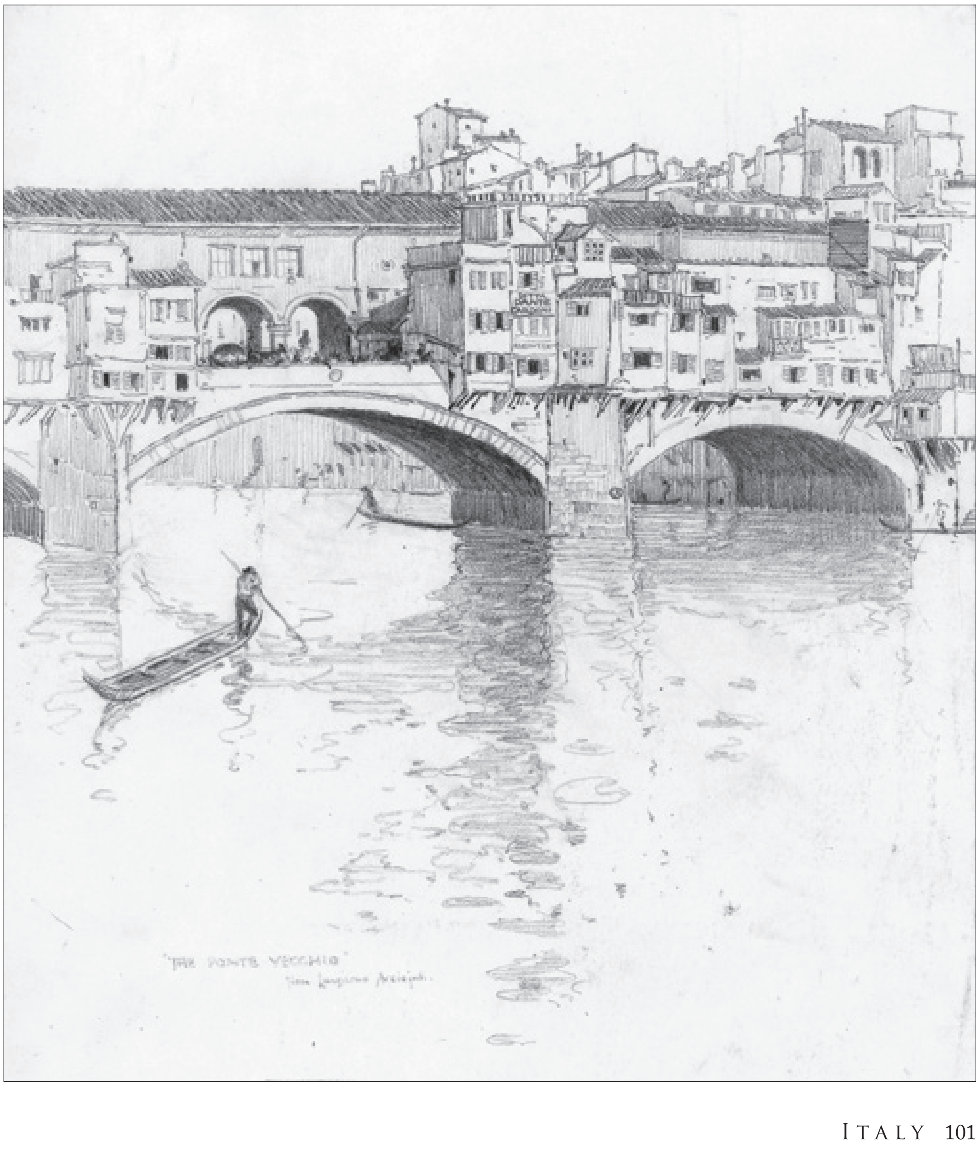
The music in this festival ranges from 14th-century devotional songs to Puccini's string quartet, from bawdy ditties of the Early Renaissance to the magnificent celebrations of a Grand Ducal wedding. Medici patronage accounts for much of the programme, among which are the extraordinary sixty part mass written in 1566 by Alessandro Striggio, the most ambitious piece of music of its time.

The performers we have selected are musicians of the highest calibre, leading specialists in their genre both Italian and British.

Venues range from Brunelleschi's Basilica of San Lorenzo to a private palace on the western periphery, from the exquisite Gothic church of Santa Trinita to the grand Villa Medicea at Artimino.

All the concerts are private, access being exclusive to those who purchase a package which includes not only all the concerts but also hotel, flights, coach travel, lectures, many meals and many other services.

Visit www.martinrandall.com for details and bookings or contact us for the dedicated brochure.



The River Arno at Florence,
drawing by Fred Richards 1914.

FLORENCE

CRADLE OF THE RENAISSANCE

7–13 November 2011 (MY 109)
This tour is currently full.

20–26 February 2012 (MY 168)
7 days • £1,980
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

12–18 November 2012 (MZ 427)
7 days • £2,040
Lecturer: Dr Roberto Cobianchi

The best place for an art history tour – highly influential art, wonderful architecture.

The Renaissance occupies centre stage; mediaeval and other periods are not ignored.

A smaller group than usual.

A first visit to Florence can be an overwhelming experience, and it seems that no amount of revisiting can exhaust her riches, or stem the growth of affection and awe which the city inspires in regular visitors.

For hundreds of years the city nurtured an unceasing succession of great artists. No other place can rival Florence for the quantity of first-rate, locally-produced works of art, many still in the sites for which they were created or in museums a few hundred yards away. Giotto, Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masaccio, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo – these are some of the artists and architects whose works will be studied on the tours, fully justifying Florence's epithet as the cradle of the Renaissance.

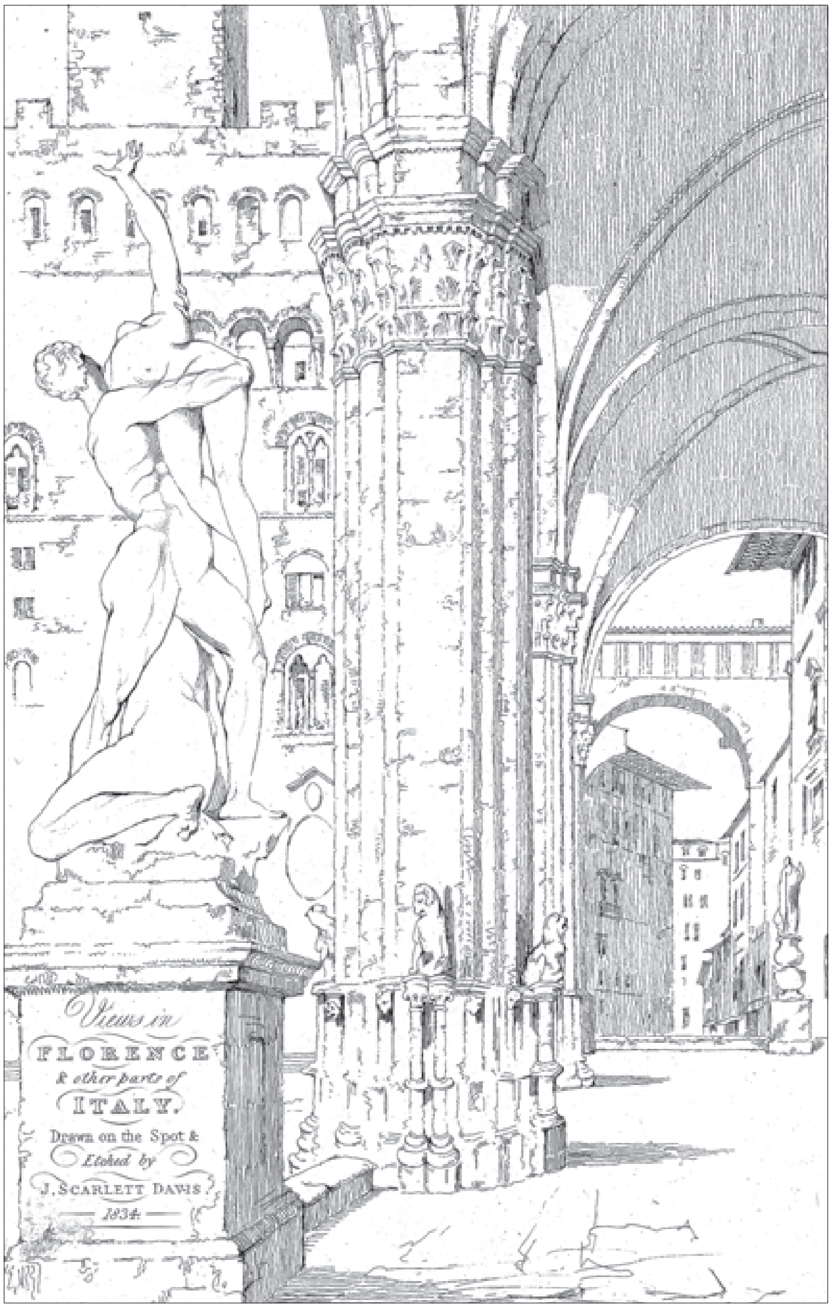
Florence is moreover one of the loveliest cities in the world, ringed by the foothills of the Apennines and sliced in two by the River Arno. Narrow alleys lead between the expansive piazze, supremely graceful Renaissance arcades abound while the massive scale of the buildings impressively demonstrates the wealth once generated by its precocious economy.

It is now a substantial, vibrant city, yet the past is omnipresent, and from sections of the mediaeval city walls one can still look out over olive groves.

Though the number of visitors to Florence has swelled hugely in recent years, it is still possible during winter, and with careful planning, to explore the city and enjoy its art in relative tranquillity.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.45am from London Heathrow to Pisa and transfer by coach to Florence in time for a late afternoon visit to S. Maria Novella, the Dominican church with many works of art (Masaccio's Trinità, Ghirlandaio's frescoed sanctuary).



The Loggia dei Lanzi, etching by J. Scarlett Davis 1834.

Day 2. In the morning visit the Piazza della Signoria, civic centre of Florence with masterpieces of public sculpture. The Palazzo Vecchio, fortified civic centre of the republic, has several rooms designed by Vasari and containing works by Michelangelo, Donatello and Ghirlandaio. Study further Renaissance statuary at the church-cum-granary of Orsanmichele. In the afternoon visit the cathedral and associated buildings and artworks: Byzantine mosaics and Renaissance sculpture in the baptistry, the polychromatic marble cathedral capped by Brunelleschi's massive dome, and the museum with works of art from both buildings.

Day 3. Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital, begun 1419, was the first building to embody stylistic elements indisputably identifiable as Renaissance. See Michelangelo's newly cleaned *David* and the 'Slaves' in the Accademia and the frescoes and panels of pious simplicity by Fra Angelico in the Friary of S. Marco. Lunch is at a restaurant on the Piazzale Michelangelo before a visit to San Miniato al Monte, the Romanesque abbey church with panoramic views of the city.

Day 4. A Medici morning includes San Lorenzo, the family parish church designed by Brunelleschi, their burial chapel in the contiguous New Sacristy with Michelangelo's largest sculptural ensemble and the chapel in the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi which has exquisite frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli. Visit (by special arrangement) the Laurentian Library, Michelangelo's most substantial building in Florence. The afternoon is devoted to the Uffizi, Italy's most important art gallery, which has masterpieces by every major Florentine painter as well as international Old Masters.

Day 5. Walk to the vast Franciscan church of Santa Croce, favoured burial place for leading Florentines and abundantly furnished with sculpted tombs, altarpieces and frescoes. The museum of sculpture at the Bargello has famous works by Donatello, Verrocchio, Michelangelo and others. Free afternoon.

Day 6. Cross the river to the Oltr'Arno. The redoubtable Palazzo Pitti houses several museums including the Galleria Palatina, outstanding particularly for High Renaissance and Baroque paintings. Behind lie the extensive Boboli Gardens at the top of which is an 18th-century ballroom and garden overlooking olive groves. In the afternoon see the frescoes by Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel, which constitute the single most important work of painting of the Early Renaissance. Visit Santo Spirito, Brunelleschi's last great building, with many 15th-century altarpieces.

Day 7. Visit Sta Trinità with fine frescoes by Ghirlandaio before driving to Pisa Airport. The flight arrives at Heathrow at c. 3.15pm.

Practicalities

Prices in 2012: **£1,980** (February), **£2,040** (November) (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); private coach for airport transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions for museums, etc.; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £240** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £1,820** (February), **£1,870** (November).

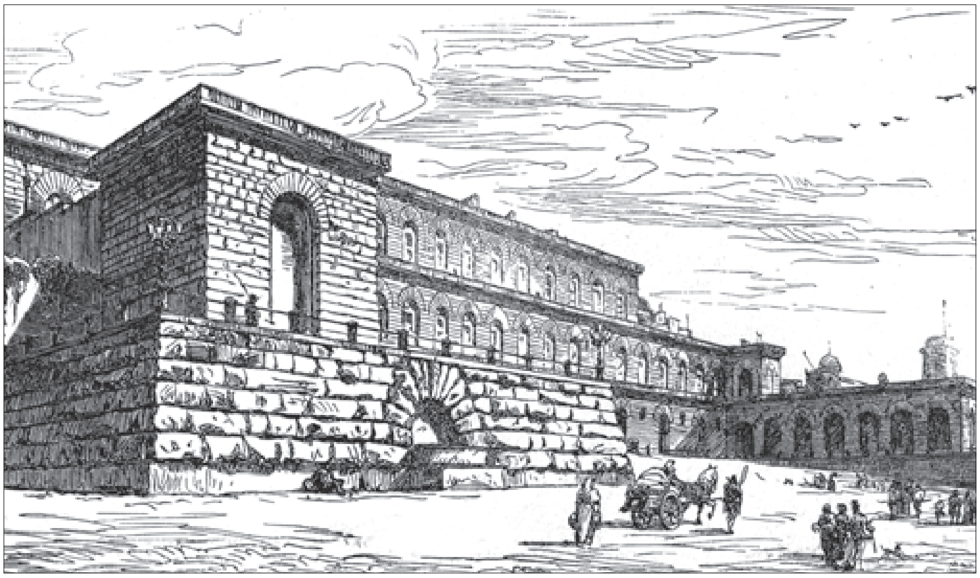
Hotel: a delightful, recently renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location. Rooms are stylishly decorated. Dinners are at selected restaurants nearby.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 16 miles.

Small group: between 8 and 18 participants.

FLORENCE REVISITED

ART OFF THE BEATEN TRACK & IN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS



Palazzo Pitti, engraving from *Italy: Its Rivers, Its Lakes, Its Cities, Its Arts*, 1903.

19–25 November 2012 (MZ 430)
7 days • £2,130
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

Visits places that are private or not easily accessible to the public.

Includes a few places outside Florence – Fiesole, Poggio a Caiano, Carmignano, Artimino, Galluzzo.

The B list? An A list by the standards of nearly everywhere else in the world.

So abundant are Florence's artistic riches that some masterpieces elude all but the most regular visitors. And those that are in private ownership, or for which access is only by special arrangement, are beyond the reach of all but the well-connected resident, unless you join this tour, which has been designed specially for those who are familiar with the main sights. As an introduction to Florence, it would be decidedly eccentric. As a week spent in pursuit of great art and architecture in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, it will be a delight. In quality and importance, the art seen far exceeds that on many of our tours to regions which have been less creative. But in Florence, even the second division is a world-beater.

One of the reasons why many of the items on this itinerary are usually missed is simply because they are, geographically, peripheral, being located in the suburbs, or, even if within walking distance of the centre, they are away from the main clusters of monuments and museums.

Subsidiary themes will emerge, such as depictions of the Last Supper, and the brief but brilliant episode of Mannerist painting. But the tour is a medley of pleasures, from mediaeval to (nearly) modern, from the famous to the little known, from the hard-to-find to the (nearly) impossible to get into. And then there is the beauty of Florence itself, and the charm of its surroundings. There will also be free time in which you could re-visit some of the major museums and monuments.

Many of the visits are by special arrangement and are dependent on the generosity of owners or institutions. There is the chance that one or two visits may have to be withdrawn, but suitable alternatives will be arranged.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.00am from London Heathrow to Pisa. Drive to Florence. Visit the Museo 'Firenze com'era' which illustrates the history of the city.

Day 2. See Ghirlandaio's *Last Supper* at Ognissanti and Perugino's tranquil *Crucifixion* in Sta Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi. The grand 17th-century Palazzo Corsini has the finest private collection in Florence, with pictures by Botticelli, Bellini, Sebastiano, Rosso, etc. (subject to confirmation).

Day 3. *The Last Supper* by Andrea del Sarto at San Salvi is the greatest 16th-century picture in Florence. Visit the Badia Fiesolana near Fiesole, a 15th-century church with a Romanesque façade, and S. Domenico, which has paintings by Fra Angelico. In Fiesole, see mediaeval and Renaissance altarpieces in the cathedral and S. Francesco, and the well-preserved Roman theatre. The Villa Medici is one of the earliest of the family's country retreats.

Florence Revisited
Continued

Day 4. See Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Magi* in Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital and Michelozzo's plan of Santissima Annunziata. There are frescoes here and at the Chiostro dello Scalzo by Andrea del Sarto and other Mannerist masters. The Cenacolo di Sant'Apollonia has a *Last Supper* by Andrea del Castagno, and another by Perugino's workshop at the Cenacolo di Foligno. Free afternoon.

Day 5. Walk through the Vasari Corridor from the Uffizi to the Pitti Palace, viewing the Medici collection of artists' self-portraits. In and around the Pitti Palace there is a range of museums, the great picture collection of the Galleria Palatina and at the top of the Boboli Gardens the Porcelain Museum in an 18th-century ballroom. There is a visit to a private palace with paintings by Pontormo (subject to confirmation).

Day 6. Poggio a Caiano was the country retreat of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and a highly important monument in the history of grand country houses. At Carmignano is the exquisite *Annunciation* by Pontormo. Artimino is another Medici villa. The Carthusian monastery at Galluzzo has beautiful cloisters and paintings by Pontormo.

Day 7. Fly from Pisa to London Heathrow, arriving c. 3.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,130 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); private coach travel outside the city centre for the transfers and excursions; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; admission for all the included visits; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers, guides; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £240** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £1,970.**

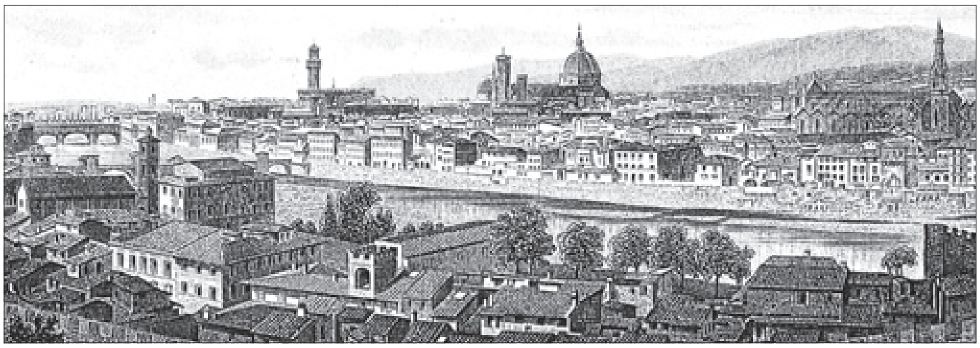
Hotel: a delightful, recently renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location. Rooms are stylishly decorated. Dinners are at selected restaurants nearby.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, and the tour would not be suitable for anyone who has any difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing, or standing for long periods of time in museums. The average distance by coach per day is 24 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 8 and 18 participants.

WRITERS' FLORENCE

VISITORS, RESIDENTS & EXILES: LITERARY LIVES & LITERATURE



Florence, steel engraving c. 1870.

18–22 October 2011 (MY 101)
5 days • £1,680
Lecturer: Jonathan Keates,
Reader: Charles Neville

16–20 October 2012 (MZ 397)
5 days • £1,680
Lecturer: Jonathan Keates,
Reader: to be confirmed

Florence has a remarkable place in the history of English literature – so many important writers visited the city or lived here.

See places they frequented and inhabited, which inspired them and which they described.

Attention is also paid to American, French and German writers, and to great Italians.

Led by a literary historian and by an actor who reads relevant passages in pertinent places.

In 2011, the opportunity to combine with *A Festival of Music in Florence*, 23–28 October.

Were the role of Florence in the history of the visual arts to be comparable to that of, say, Bournemouth, the name of the ancient city on the Arno would still resound as one of the cultural centres of Europe. As a city of literature, she has few rivals. The Italian language as we know it is basically mediaeval Tuscan, refined, burnished and standardised by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, all (more or less) fourteenth-century Florentines. They not only laid the foundations of one of the great bodies of world literature, but provided a *lingua franca* for the politically fissiparous peninsula – and for courtly and cultured communication for the rest of civilized Europe during the Renaissance and Early Modern periods.

Italian literature, however, plays a subsidiary role in this tour: English (and American) predominates. The Athens on the Arno was an extraordinary magnet for writers of all sorts. Milton was a precocious visitor (he met Galileo), but it was from the beginning of the nineteenth century that a trickle became a flood – Shelley, Byron and Scott; the Brownings, Dickens and Eliot; Henry James, Forster and Lawrence. These are just some of the bigger names; the penumbra of lesser men of letters, diarists, historians and critics is countless.

The English and American communities in and around Florence may have numbered 30,000 at the turn of the nineteenth century. A sunny place for shady people? Some were running away (there was a perceptible increase after the trial of Oscar Wilde), but climate, beauty, cheap servants and the presence of fellow aesthetes were honourable enough reasons for voluntary exile or short-term sojourn. There would have been few who chose Florence who were not motivated by the presence of its mighty cultural achievements, and, by extension, by the presence of people of similar cultivation, tastes and interests.

The heart of the tour consists of historical discourse, biographical narrative and literary interpretation provided by writer, historian and critic Jonathan Keates, illustrated with pertinent texts read by an actor. The result should be an enriched understanding of the work of a number of great writers, and a novel and illuminating perspective on the most alluring of all Italian cities.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Gatwick to Pisa and drive to the hotel near Sta Maria Novella. Visit the church where Boccaccio began his Decameron; Henry James frequently stayed in the piazza, as did Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, translator of *The Divine Comedy.* Dante was a major influence on Milton, whose Florentine sojourns in 1638 and 1639 enhanced his erudition but spurred his love of English liberty; we see where he lived.

Day 2. Via del Tornabuoni was at the heart of fashionable Florence in the 19th century, and two literary cafés of that era are still in business today. George Eliot stayed here in 1860 while researching *Romola*. Across the Arno, pass the building where Dostoevsky finished *The Idiot* in 1868–9. Celebrated by Florentines for her support of the Risorgimento, Elizabeth Barrett Browning lived with Robert in Casa Guidi from 1847 till her death in 1861, now restored and furnished to resemble its appearance then.

Day 3. Pass the boarding house where Shelly lived 1819–20 and composed *Prometheus Unbound* and *Ode to the West Wind*. Santa Croce is the burial place of the humanists Bruni, Alberti and Machiavelli, and of Michelangelo and Galileo; Dante is commemorated by a cenotaph. Stendhal's Syndrome is named after the writer's collapse here. The model for the Pension Bartolini in *Room with a View*, where E.M. Forster stayed in 1901, is nearby. In the English Cemetery lie Walter Savage Landor, Frances Trollope and Elizabeth Browning.

Day 4. By special arrangement, visit La Pietra, perhaps the finest villa in the vicinity of Florence, until 1994 the home of Harold Acton, writer, aesthete and host. The little hilltop town of Fiesole, which overlooks Florence, was regarded as an essential ingredient in a cultured visitor's itinerary. Visit the gardens of the Villa Medici, the cathedral and the convent of San Francesco.

Day 5. Fly from Pisa, arriving London Gatwick c. 4.00pm. Participants in the Florence Music Festival (2011) have some free time until the festival starts tomorrow evening.

Practicalities

Price: £1,680 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) with British Airways (aircraft: Boeing 737); hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all tips; all state and airport taxes; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer; the services of the lecturer and the actor. **Single supplement £195** (2011), **£230** (2012) (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £1,540** (2011), **£1,520** (2012).

Price if participating in the *A Festival of Music in Florence* (2011 only): **£1,710. Single supplement £240** (includes an extra night – but not flights, which are included in the festival price).

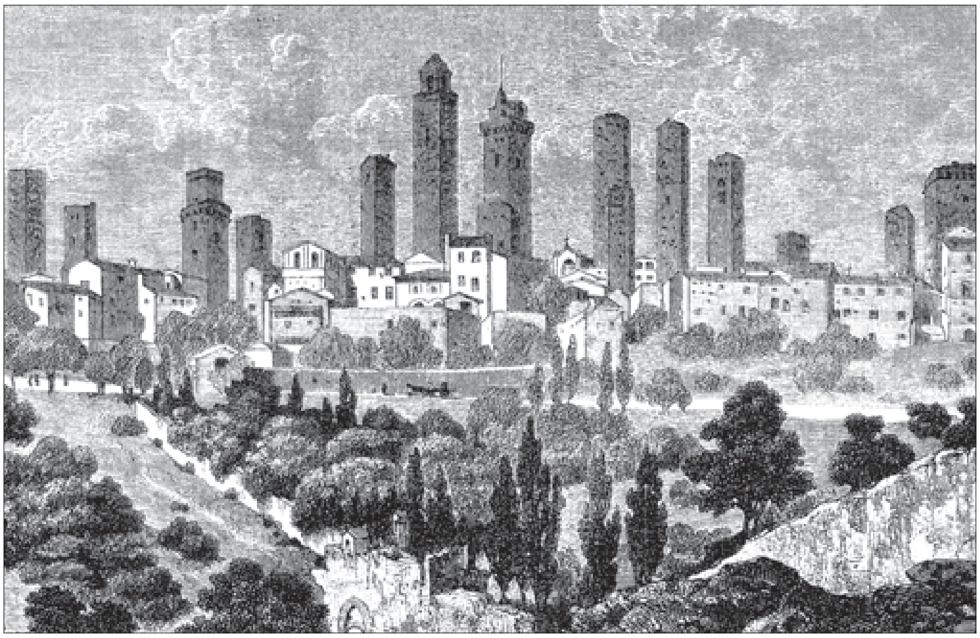
Hotel: a delightful, recently renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location. Rooms are stylishly decorated and have either a bath or a shower. Dinners are at nearby restaurants.

How strenuous? A lot of walking. This tour is not suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing. The average distance by coach per day is 34 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 19 participants.

SAN GIMIGNANO

AND HILLTOP TOWNS OF TUSCANY



San Gimignano, late-19th-century wood engraving.

29 Oct.–2 November 2011 (MY 103)
5 days • £1,390
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

Ask us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

A winter break in one of the most extraordinary of Tuscan hill towns.

Visits to nearby places – Siena, Volterra, Certaldo, Monteriggioni.

Beautiful landscape, wonderful streetscape, outstanding mediaeval and Renaissance painting, great buildings.

Can be combined with *A Festival of Music in Florence*, 23–29 October 2011.

Towards the end of a winter afternoon, when the last of the day trippers have departed and the shutters have clattered down on the souvenir shops, an ineffable timelessness descends. While dusk begins to obscure the hills and darken the streets, the inhabitants get on with their lives – shopping, socialising, doing business – amidst the most extraordinary streetscape in Europe. The ordinary within the quite extraordinary – that is the charm of Italy. San Gimignano is not a museum but a living country town.

It is also so improbable a phenomenon, with fourteen hundred-foot stone tower houses, that a day trip does not always suffice to eradicate incredulity, let alone allow the visitor to feel the austere magic of the place. Scarcely changed in appearance for six hundred years, and looking like a balding porcupine in a searingly beautiful Tuscan landscape, the town provides a microcosm of life and art in mediaeval Italy.

The towers and circuit of walls were built not only in response to hostilities with neighbouring city-states but also to the incessant conflict between the swaggering, belligerent nobility and the emergent merchants and tradesmen.

Nevertheless, the little city flourished. A nodal point on the main north-south road to Rome, hospices and friaries swelled to serve pilgrims, officials and traders. Wealth, pride and piety conspired to attract some of the best artistic talent to embellish the churches. But San Gimignano never recovered from the double blow of the Black Death of 1348 and submission to Florence shortly after. Extending the theme of hilltop towns, two little ones are included: Certaldo, snug in the wooded Val'Elsa, and Monteriggioni, a one-horse village with magnificent fortifications. And visits are made to two of the greatest: Volterra, rugged and dour, and Siena, the largest and the most beautiful of them all.

Practicalities – in brief

Price: £1,390 (deposit £200). **Single supplement £130 or £170** (higher supplement for a view). **Price without flights £1,210.**

Hotel: a 3-star hotel in the central square with fine views; rooms vary in size and outlook.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking, some of it on uneven ground and much of it uphill.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

WALKING IN TUSCANY

ART, ARCHITECTURE & LANDSCAPES IN VAL D'ORCIA & CHIANTI

7–14 May 2012 (MY 237)
8 days • £2,320
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

15–22 October 2012 (MZ 402)
8 days • £2,320
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

Five walks of between 4 and 6 miles through some of the most stunningly beautiful countryside in Europe.

Visit a selection of minor masterpieces of art and architecture and vernacular building.

Based in two tiny towns in topographically diverse areas of Tuscany.

Two wine tastings, in Montalcino and Chianti.

To walk through quintessentially Tuscan landscapes, along chalky tracks lined with soaring cypress trees and flanked by neat rows of vines and well-kept olive trees, must surely be one of life's great pleasures. The walks selected here pass through farmland and woodland, where primrose, violets and cyclamen nestle below chestnut, holm oak and beech. Pine trees grace the higher terrain. Walking is conducive to observing at close quarters the variations of plant, animal and birdlife in this enchanting countryside.

But if seeing the artistic and architectural delights in these parts of Tuscany is your aim, this tour also offers opportunity to do so. We avoid the tourist throngs in the larger towns and cities and concentrate on the smaller and less visited places. Mediaeval fortress towns, Romanesque churches, Renaissance palazzi and paintings of the Sienese school are particularly in evidence here. Sometimes these are seen at the beginning or the end of a morning's walk, sometimes during a half day spent in leisurely exploration of one of the enchanting little cities or settlements. All are seen in the enlightening company of an art historian.

And while the walks are taxing enough to ensure that hearty evening meals are fully deserved, they are not so strenuous as to detract from enjoying the ever-changing views and natural, agricultural and constructed sights.

We take trouble to ensure that much of what you eat is produced from fine local ingredients, including Pecorino cheese (whose pungent flavour is due to the herbs grazed by ewes on the unique clay soils south of Siena) and the prized salami of the *cinta senese* pigs. The food is often perfectly complemented by a glass of one of the world's finest red wines.

As this tour is based for three nights in Radda in Chianti, today still the nucleus of Tuscan viticulture and where the noble Sangiovese vine is most prevalent, opportunity is allowed for tastings of these robust reds. We also visit a producer of some of the finest Chianti Classico, in a former monastery where thirsty monks made a wine similar to the sophisticated Chianti produced today.

Itinerary

Day 1: Fly at c. 9.15am from London Heathrow to Pisa. Drive to Pienza, a gem of Renaissance architecture created by Pope Pius II as a tribute to his place of birth, which is the base for four nights.

Day 2: San Quirico, Pienza. Drive to the little walled town of San Quirico d'Orcia. Visit the Collegiata with its splendid portals and the Horti Leonini, public gardens dating to the 17th century. Walk back to Pienza through rolling, open farmland (c. 6 miles) of rare beauty, visiting the Romanesque church of Cornignano before the steady climb to Pienza. In the afternoon, gently explore this little city where at the centre the cathedral, episcopal palace and Pius' own palazzo form a harmonious group.

Day 3: Sant'Antimo, Montalcino. Once an impregnable fortress and now centre of Brunello wines, Montalcino is a hilltop community with magnificent views and a collection of Sienese paintings in the museum. There is a wine tasting here. Walk down from Montalcino through the pretty Brunello valley, part vineyard, partially wooded, punctuated by farmsteads, and arrive at the remote and serene monastery of Sant'Antimo (c. 5.5 miles). This most beautiful of Romanesque churches is in part constructed of luminous alabaster. Return by coach to Pienza.

Day 4: Montepulciano, Montichiello. Montepulciano is one of the most picturesque of Tuscan hill towns, with grey stone palaces piled up towards the main square at the apex. The cathedral here is rich in Renaissance works of art, while outside the walls is a centrally-planned church, a Renaissance masterpiece. The mediaeval hamlet of Monticchiello, with views across Val d'Orcia, is the starting point for a late afternoon walk through a valley leading to Pienza (c. 4 miles).

Day 5: Monte Oliveto Maggiore, Asciano, Radda. The monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore is a fine complex of Early Renaissance art and architecture, the cloister having 36 frescoes by Signorelli and Sodoma (1505–8). Break the journey in Asciano, a delightful town sitting in the heart of the *Crete senesi*, a name deriving from the chalky Sienese earth. Radda in Chianti, once the capital of the Chianti League established in 1250, is one of the most attractive of the region's settlements. First of three nights in Radda.

Day 6: Gaiole in Chianti, Badia a Coltibuono. From Gaiole, walk a pleasantly varied route through Chianti countryside with woodland, vineyards and breath-taking vistas (c. 6 miles). Badia a Coltibuono, a former abbey founded by Vallombrosan monks, has an important history of viticulture. Lunch and wine tasting at the estate restaurant before a visit to the abbey's 16th-century frescoed refectory, gardens and wine cellars.

Day 7: Castello di Volpaia. The well-preserved hamlet of Volpaia hides sophisticated wine cellars within its mediaeval walls. The village is dedicated to the arts and wine-making, ensuring its original architectural features remain intact. Walk down through the estate's impressively maintained vineyards to the valley floor before a climb to Radda (c. 5 miles).

Day 8: Fly from Pisa, arriving London Heathrow at c. 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,320 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 320); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; 2 wine tastings; all admissions; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £380** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,170.**

Hotels. In Pienza (4 nights): a former convent dating to the 15th century close to the main square; bedrooms vary in size and are simply decorated; terrace with formal gardens and impressive view and restaurant serving good Tuscan cooking. In Radda (3 nights): a 17th-century manor house with historical links to Chianti wine production; several lounges, terrace with valley view, restaurant and outdoor pool; rooms vary in size.

How strenuous? This tour should only be considered by those who are used to regular country walking, with some uphill content. Strong knees and ankles are essential, as are a pair of well-worn hiking boots with good ankle support. Walks have been carefully selected but some steep rises and falls are unavoidable and terrain can be loose under foot, particularly in wet weather. There are five walks of between 4 and 6 miles. Average distance by coach per day: 44 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 18 participants.

Right: an etching of Tuscan landscape, c. 1920s.

GARDENS OF TUSCANY

26 May–2 June 2012 (MY 259)
8 days • £2,720
Lecturer: Dr Katie Campbell

Wonderful range of gardens from early Renaissance to 20th century, several visited by special arrangement.

Hotels in central Florence and Siena with free time to explore both cities.

Ideal time of year to see Tuscany in bloom.

For centuries the landscape of Tuscany has enchanted both residents and visitors with its seductive contours, receding vistas, the subtle textures of its vegetation and its human scale. With the revival of Classical culture from the fourteenth century, this landscape has been incorporated architecturally into the villas and gardens that grew in the environs of the cities of Florence and Siena.

More than anywhere else, the topography here allowed magnificent use of tilting terrain and distant vistas. The Early Renaissance villas and gardens were designed as retreats from public life in the busy city. Moreover, they were the ideal place for philosophical debate, inspired by the spirit of Plato's academy as promulgated by humanist learning.

Gardens of the late Renaissance and Baroque period became more elaborate status symbols, adorned with rare plants, sculpture and water works. Uniting natural and artificial beauty, they were designed to recreate Paradise on Earth, an achievable Utopia, an accessible Arcadia.

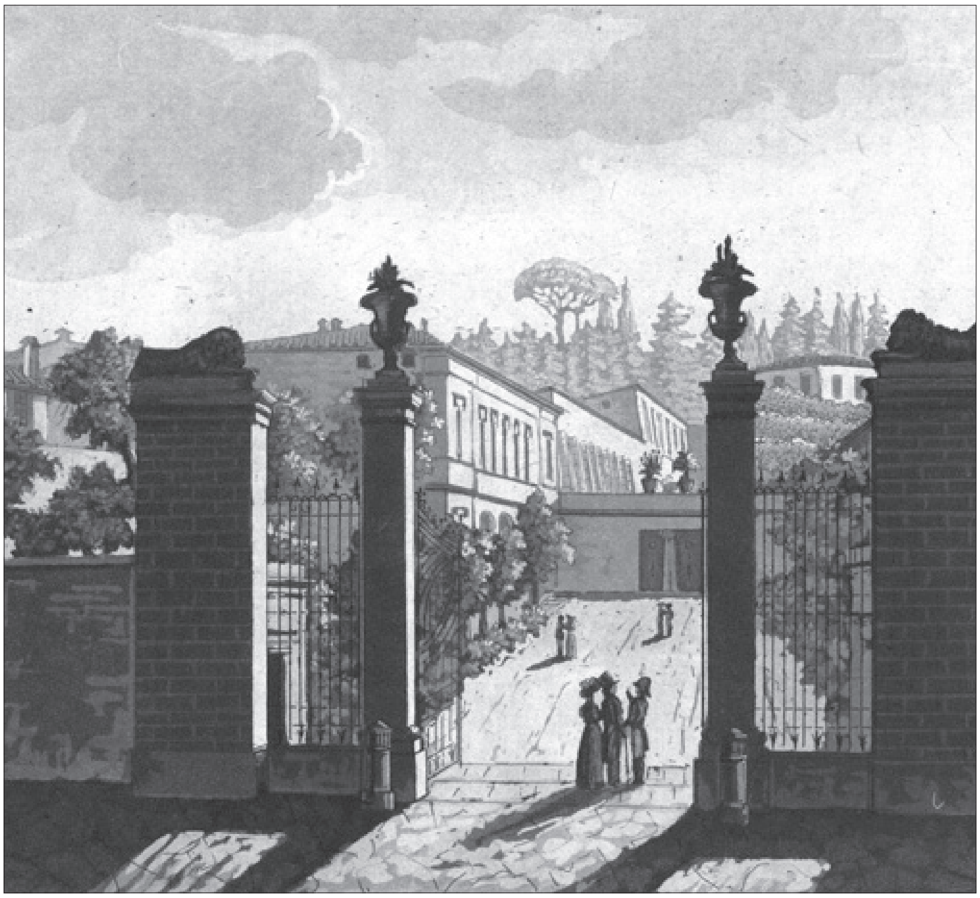
After a spell of landscape design in the English style in the nineteenth century, the Tuscan formal garden returned in its most glorious form in the early twentieth century, this time designed mostly for wealthy foreigners. A feature of this tour are the gardens by Cecil Pinsent, an Englishman and the leading garden designer of his time.

Some of the gardens and villas visited are opened only by special arrangement nearer the time. There may be substitutes for some places mentioned.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Heathrow to Pisa. Drive to Florence where the first four nights are spent.

Day 2: the northern fringes of Florence. The Villa Medicea at Castello, designed by Tribolo and completed by Buontalenti for Duke Cosimo I. Nearby is La Petraia; transformed for Cardinal Ferdinando de'Medici by Buontalenti in 1576, its courtyard adorned with frescoes in the 17th cent. and the whole adapted in the 19th cent. for the first King of Italy. In the afternoon visit the Villa Corsi-Salviati at Sesto Fiorentino, the most Baroque and the most French of the Tuscan gardens. The Villa Bellosguardo has a fascinating layered garden, briefly owned by Enrico Caruso.


Florence, Boboli Gardens, aquatint c. 1820.

Day 3: Fiesole, Settignano. The Villa Medici at Fiesole was built by Michelozzo in the fifteenth century. The first to provide a stunning view over Florence, it later became home to Sibyl Cutting and her daughter Iris Origo. The garden of the adjacent Villa Le Balze was designed by Cecil Pinsent for the American philosopher Charles Augustus Strong as a revival of an Italian Renaissance ideal. The Villa Gamberaia at Settignano is a late-19th-cent. marvel with formal water garden and tall hedges, beautifully maintained. Nearby is another of Pinsent's gardens at Villa I Tatti, owned by the eminent historian Bernard Berenson in the early 20th century.

Day 4: Florence. The Boboli gardens are the grandest and most famous of all Medici gardens. Buontalenti's Great Grotto has been restored to its former glory. The Torrigiani gardens are a major example of Romantic landscapes in Italy, complete with ruined temples and Gothic tower. Free afternoon.

Day 5: the southern fringes of Florence, southern Tuscany, Siena. The Giardino Capponi was transformed by Pinsent into a series of terraces with beautiful views of the city. Lunch in Arcetri, where Galileo had a villa, before continuing the drive south into the heart of Tuscany. Visit Villa la Foce, once the home of Iris Origo, who commissioned Cecil Pinsent's most magnificent creation. First of three nights in Siena.

Day 6: in and around Siena. In the morning visit the Villa Chigi at Vicobello, a creation by the young Baldassare Peruzzi just outside Siena. The afternoon is free in Siena. Spilling over a concatenation of hilltops, Siena is the most extensive and unspoilt mediaeval town in existence, and perhaps the most beautiful.

Day 7: central Tuscany. The magnificent hillside setting of the 17th-cent. Villa Cetinale for Cardinal Chigi includes sacred elements such as a (real) hermitage at the top of the hill, connected with the lower garden by a *scala santa*. The Villa Celsa is spectacularly situated in blissful solitude above the Valle di Rosia with box terraces, flights of steps and fish pond.

Lunch is in one of the villas. The gardens of the Palazzo Piccolomini in Pienza have breathtaking views of the Tuscan countryside.

Day 8. Fly from Pisa, arriving Heathrow c. 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,720 (deposit £300); this includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Boeing 737, Airbus A320); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all airport and other taxes; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £380** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,570.**

Hotels: in Florence (4 nights): a delightful, recently renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location; rooms are stylishly decorated. In Siena (3 nights): a luxury 5-star hotel housed in Palazzo Gori Pannilini, built in the 17th century for Pope Alexander VII; rooms are elegantly and traditionally furnished; there is a good restaurant.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking. Some gardens are very large, many are on sloping ground and the coach will often not be able to set down at the entrance to the sites. Average distance by coach per day: 40 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

GARDEN TOURS

Brittany..38
Gardens of the Riviera 53
Gardens & Villas of the Italian Lakes.................................80
Gardens of Tuscany..............................108
Villas & Gardens of Campagna Romana..........................110
West Country Gardens 175
Grampian Gardens...............................175

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

THE HEART OF ITALY

TUSCANY & UMBRIA

24–31 March 2012 (MY 192)
8 days • £2,100
Lecturer: Dr Antonia Whitley

16–23 September 2012 (MZ 375)
8 days • £2,100
Lecturer: Dr Helen Langdon

Also: 6–15 October 2011 (MY 991)
10 days • £2,530
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Ask us for full details of the 10-day 2011 tour or visit www.martinrandall.com

An excellent introduction to the art and architecture of Umbria and Tuscany.

Based throughout in the hilltop town of Spello.

One of our longest established and most popular tours, constantly updated.

Avoiding the major centres, this tour concentrate on a selection of the smaller towns and cities – the centri minori – of Umbria and Tuscany. Spread across the heart of Italy, these regions contain a disproportionately large quantity of what the country is most loved for: ancient streetscape crammed onto hilltops, exquisitely undulating countryside of olive, cypress and vine, and an abundance of wonderful art.

Rarely can the spirit of the Middle Ages be so potently felt as in the hill towns of central Italy. That such small communities could have built each dwelling so massively, raised churches and public buildings of such magnificence and created works of art of such monumentality inspires awe bordering on disbelief among today's visitors.

This is also the heartland of the Renaissance, and several of the leading artists of the era were natives who worked here before being inveigled to the great metropolises of Florence and Rome.

Many of the most important and beautiful of Italy's incomparable patrimony of paintings and frescos are included on this tour. The great Giottesque cycle at Assisi stands at the beginning of the modern era of art, Piero della Francesca's Arezzo frescoes are among the greatest achievements of the Early Renaissance and the Last Judgement frescoes by Signorelli in Orvieto are on the cusp of the High Renaissance. While in the field of architecture Romanesque and Gothic predominate, there are many major Renaissance buildings, including the centrally-planned churches at Todi and Montepulciano.

The man-made environment melds with the natural in a picturesque union of intense beauty. It is a landscape of rumpled hills, sometimes rugged and forested, sometimes tamed in the struggle to cultivate, always speckled with ancient farmsteads, fortified villages and isolated churches. Even from the central piazze of many of these towns there are views of countryside which seems scarcely to have changed for centuries.

We have two versions of the tour, both of which visit Umbria (where the tour is based) and Tuscany. The ten day tour (October 2011 only – ask us for details) finishes in the Marches with two nights in Urbino.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.40am from London Heathrow to Rome. Drive to Spello, the small, quiet town which is the base for this tour.

Day 2: Assisi. Drive the short distance to Assisi and spend much of the morning at San Francesco, mother church of the Franciscan Order. Here is one of the greatest assemblages of mediaeval fresco painting, including the controversial cycle of the *Life of St Francis*. In the afternoon walk through the austere mediaeval streets and visit the church of S. Chiara and the Romanesque cathedral.

Day 3: Spello, Montefalco. The small hilltop town of Spello has fine Roman remains and richly-coloured Renaissance frescoes by Pinturicchio in the church of S. Maria Maggiore. Montefalco is another delightful hilltop community with magnificent views of the valley below and hills around. In the church of San Francesco are frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli. Some free time in Spello.

Day 4: Perugia, capital of Umbria, is one of the largest and loveliest of Italian hill towns and has both major works of art and architecture and an authentic, age-old liveliness of a prosperous market town. Visits include the Palazzo dei Priori, the mediaeval town hall now housing the National Gallery of Umbria, and two merchants' halls, one with frescoes by native artist Perugino. See also the Etruscan city gateway, the mediaeval walls and the richly carved façade of the church of S. Bernardino.

Day 5: Pienza, Montepulciano. The humanist Pope Pius II was born in the tiny town of Pienza and instigated the rebuilding of the centre of Pienza in accordance with Renaissance ideals. The cathedral, episcopal palace and his own palazzo form a harmonious group. Montepulciano is one of the most picturesque of Tuscan hill towns with a centrally-planned Renaissance church and a cathedral with several outstanding works of art.

Day 6: Sansepolcro, Arezzo, two cities which were laid out on alluvial plains. Borgo Sansepolcro, with a regular grid pattern betraying its Roman origin, was the home town of the 15th-century painter Piero della Francesca; see his *Resurrection* and other works in the museum. Arezzo was one of the great cities of Tuscany in the Middle Ages, and was also a Roman foundation. In the church of S. Francesco is Piero della Francesca's masterpiece, the fresco cycle of *The Legend of the True Cross*. See also the cathedral and a Romanesque church with an altarpiece by the 14th-century Sienese painter Pietro Lorenzetti.

Day 7: Todi, Orvieto. Visit S. Maria della Consolazione, Todi, a centrally–planned Renaissance church influenced by Bramante's ideas. Continue to Orvieto where the glistening marble Gothic cathedral dominates this entrancing hilltop town and among its treasures are the low relief sculptures by Maitani and the apocalyptic Last Judgement frescoes by Signorelli (1505).

Day 8: Bagnaia. Break the return journey to Rome with the wonderful Renaissance gardens at the Villa Lante at Bagnaia. Lunch here before flying from Rome, arriving London Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

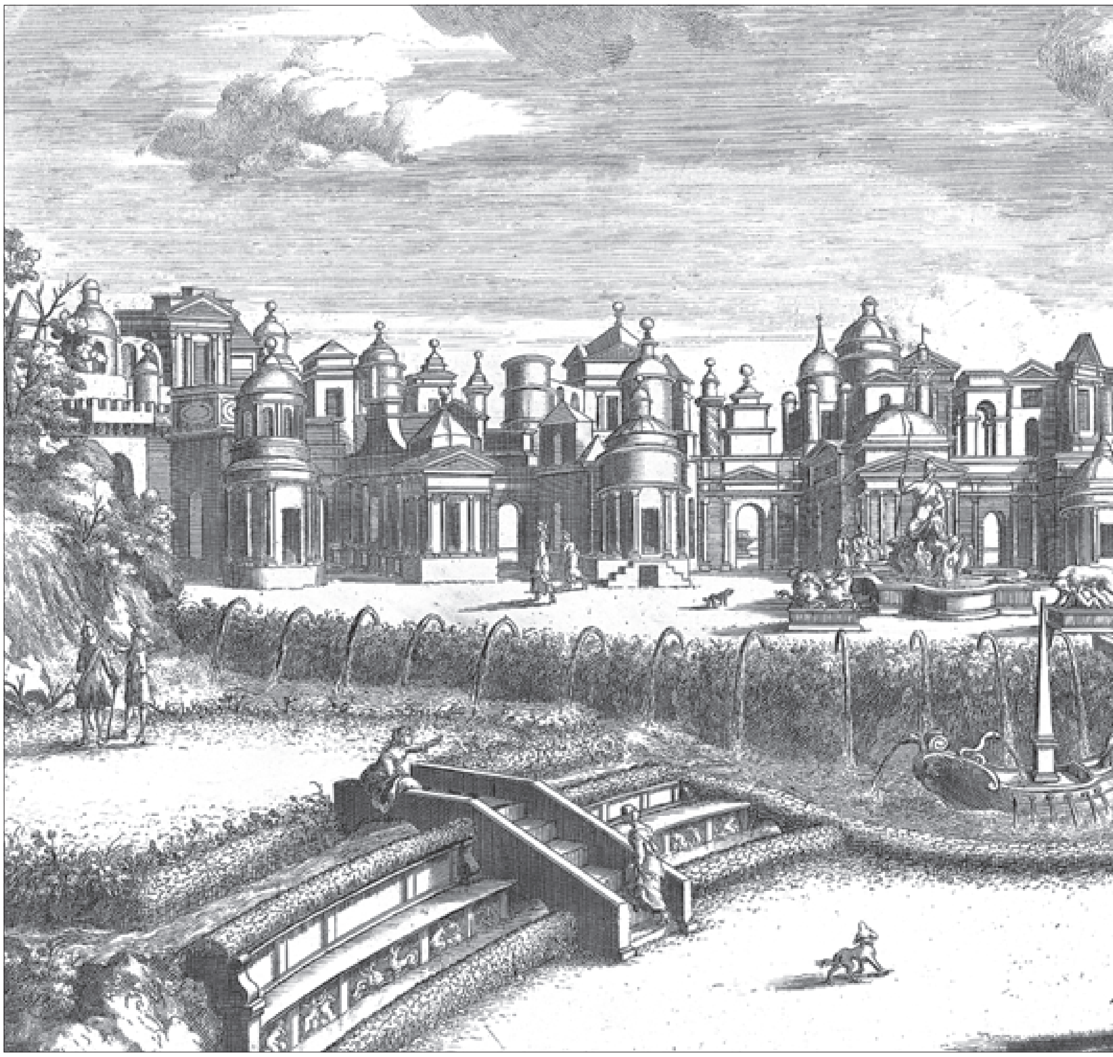
Price: £2,100 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Boeing 757, Airbus 320); private coach travel; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £170** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £1,930.**

Hotel: a modest 4-star in the centre converted from a family palazzo back to the 17th century. Furnishings are in keeping with the history of the building. There is a frescoed lounge and a terraced garden with views of the countryside. Rooms are comfortable but vary in size.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking, much of it on steep and roughly paved streets: agility and sure-footedness are essential. Average distance by coach per day: 95 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

VILLAS & GARDENS OF CAMPAGNA ROMANA



Gardens at Tivoli, 18th-century copper engraving.

4–10 September 2012 (MZ 356)
7 days • £1,810
Lecturer: Dr Joachim Strupp

Renaissance villas and gardens, most accessible by special arrangement.

Vivid remains of Etruscan civilisation, emulated and displaced by the Romans.

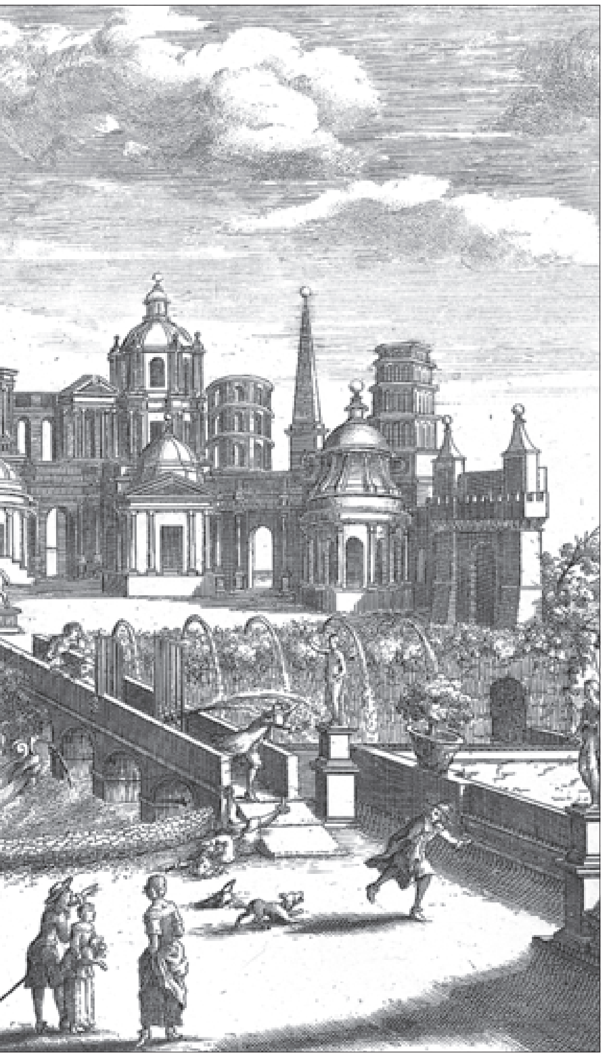
Beguiling scenery of tufa hills and 'classical' compositions.

The countryside around Rome has long been the playground of the privileged, but it was in the sixteenth century that the region of Lazio took the lead in garden design. The wealthy families of popes and cardinals such as the Farnese and Este commissioned villas and gardens in the *campagna romana* to escape from the noise and worldly cares of the capital to places of tranquillity and repose. Vasari wrote of Caprarola in the 16th century that it was 'marvellously situated for one who wishes to withdraw from the worries and tumult of the city'.

But Renaissance gardens developed to offer more than a haven of peace and a chance for contemplation; they also provided the patron with the opportunity to vaunt his knowledge of the antique world. Garden design and ornamentation were steeped in references to classical mythology. Gardens also became places of entertainment, whether formal or frivolous. The use of water tricks or *giochi d'acqua* – allowing the owner to 'drown' an unsuspecting visitor at the pull of a hidden lever – is a prime example of the latter.

The theme of hedonism is echoed in the patrimony of a much earlier yet extremely sophisticated civilisation, that of the Etruscans, whose remarkable painted tombs and monuments are dotted across the north of the region, bearing witness to their pleasure-seeking lifestyle.

VILLAS, GARDENS & ETRUSCAN SITES IN LAZIO



The towns, villas and gardens to the north of Rome are set against a backdrop of an almost fantasy, surreal landscape: villages perch high on volcanic outcrops, villas and gardens are carved out of purple tufa. To the west and south of Rome this often extraordinary scenery gives way to more classically pastoral scenes, offering glimpses of Claude Lorrain's inspiration for many of his depictions of the *campagna romana*, which in turn became the foundation of the landscape style of gardens in eighteenth-century England.

Many of the gardens can only be visited by special arrangement and it is possible that the order of visits will change from that listed here.

Itinerary

Day 1: Cerveteri. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Heathrow. Stop at the remarkable Etruscan necropolis at Cerveteri. First of four nights in Viterbo.

Day 2: Bomarzo, San Liberato, Madonna della Quercia. Vicino Orsini created a Renaissance 'theme park' at Bomarzo of extraordinary grotesque animals and statues based on figures from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. The gardens at San Liberato with lake views were created by Russell Page and contain a beautifully simple mediaeval church. The church of Madonna della Quercia just outside Viterbo is one of the finest Renaissance churches in Lazio. Overnight Viterbo.

Day 3: Bagnaia, Vignanello, Viterbo. The Villa Lante at Bagnaia, designed by Vignola, has been universally admired since its creation: the twin casinos are subordinate to the design of the delightful terraced gardens with restored *giochi d'acqua* and fountain by Giambologna. Visit, by special arrangement, the Renaissance Castello Ruspoli and its enchanting gardens. The walled city of Viterbo, once residence of the popes, has one of the most attractive mediaeval centres to be found in Italy. Overnight Viterbo.

Day 4: Tarquinia. The charming but rarely visited little town of Tarquinia has one of the best Etruscan museums in Italy, housed in the splendid 15th-century Palazzo Vitelleschi. The brightly coloured paintings on the walls of nearby Etruscan burial chambers provide a vivid picture of contemporary life. The afternoon is free. Overnight Viterbo.

Day 5: Caprarola, Frascati. On a hilltop at Caprarola, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese had an imposing pentagonal villa built by Vignola, with extensive park adorned with fountains, walled gardens and a casino. In Frascati, the recently restored gardens of the Villa Aldobrandini are richly appointed with terraces, grottoes and iconographical statuary. There is a special visit to another villa in Frascati that is normally closed to the public. First of two nights in Frascati.

Day 6: Tivoli. The vast garden at Villa d'Este became one of the classic visits on the Grand Tour. Lunch is in a good restaurant with astonishing views. Spend the afternoon at Hadrian's Villa, designed entirely by him and inspired by sites he visited during his travels in the Empire, undoubtedly the richest building project in the Roman Empire. Overnight Frascati.

Day 7: Ninfa. The perfection of the wild garden, 'Ninfa', was created from 1920s onwards by the Duchess of Sermoneta around mediaeval ruins and is blessed with a climate which plants find irresistible. Fly from Rome, arriving Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,810 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 321); private coach for excursions and transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to museums, sites and gardens visited with the group; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single room supplement £250** (double room for sole occupancy). **Price without flights £1,590.**

Hotels: in Viterbo (4 nights): the only decent 4-star hotel within walking distance of the historic centre. Rooms are comfortable and functional and have air-conditioning. In Frascati (2 nights): an outstanding 4-star hotel overlooking Frascati, it is a 16th-cent. villa which contains frescoes by Caracci and Pannini and is set in acres of parkland. The service leaves room for improvement, but it is an exceptional place to stay, and particularly appropriate for this tour.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, some of it on rough, uneven ground in the gardens, and in historic centres. The tour would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stair climbing. The average distance by coach per day is 76 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

TRASIMENO MUSIC FESTIVAL

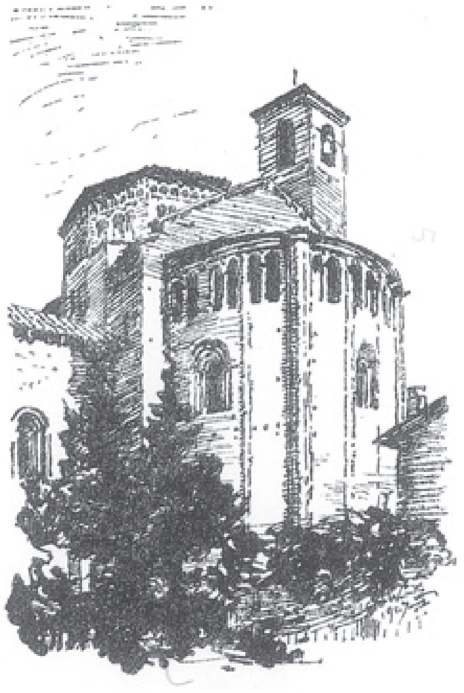
June or July 2012
Details available February 2012.
Contact us to register your interest.

OPERA IN PESARO

July or August 2012
Details available in the autumn.
Contact us to register your interest.

THE ROAD TO ROME

LA VIA FRANCIGENA



6–20 May 2012 (MY 235)
15 days • £4,240
Lecturer: John McNeill

A fascinating journey encompassing some well-known cities but particularly smaller and lesser-known places.

Long but well-paced and with the opportunity to relax and explore independently.

Led by an architectural historian whose primary contribution will be on the mediaeval buildings.

Imprecations scratched in the plaster of a wall beneath the Vatican make clear that journeys to the shrine of St Peter had begun as early as the second century. The practice received a boost after Constantine granted the Church a legal status in AD 313, and with the tour of the Holy Land by his mother, Helena, the phenomenon of Christian pilgrimage was born.

With Jerusalem only intermittently accessible, Rome was pre-eminent as a pilgrimage destination in western Christendom. In later centuries Santiago and Canterbury became serious rivals, but the superiority of Rome came to be founded not only on the tombs of St Peter and St Paul and innumerable other martyrs but also on the presence of Peter's living embodiment, the Pope.

As the papacy evolved to become a real political and ecclesiastical force, pilgrims were joined by prelates and princes, administrators and diplomats, who were impelled by duty and political ambition as much as by piety. Gregory of Tours, Wilfrid of Ripon, Charlemagne and Otto I all made the journey, and by the eleventh century Rome's status as a meeting place for the movers and shakers of Europe was assured.

What route did they take? The Via Aurelia had become little more than a series of local roads, vulnerable to raids by barbarians from the coast, and the Via Cassia was too far inland for most of the route. So a third route, the Via Francigena, was cobbled out of a sequence of lesser Roman roads. It crossed the Alps by the Great St. Bernard Pass and dropped down to the plain of the Po and its tributaries. Rising again through the Apennines, it meandered across the hills and valleys of Tuscany, with brief respite along the Tirrenian coast, before settling down for the home straight across the Roman Campagna.

The road thrived, offering travellers accommodation and the greater solace of shrines and religious foundations. The concentration of late Antique and Romanesque building astride the Via Francigena is its most telling feature.

This tour provides an enthralling journey through a wonderful range of scenery and through some of the finest of the smaller cities of north-western and central Italy. It balances nicely star places such as Pavia, Lucca and Siena with smaller and much less visited towns, but – fascinatingly – the route does not pass through any of the cities which became really big in the modern era. Motorways are avoided almost entirely.

Itinerary

Day 1: Lausanne. Fly at c. 10.15am from London Heathrow to Geneva. Drive along the north shore of Lac Léman to Lausanne and visit the excellent early Gothic cathedral. Drive up through the mountains and over the Great St Bernard Pass to Italy (unless closed by snow). First of two nights in Aosta.

Day 2: Aosta, Fénis. Morning stroll through Aosta, the first significant town encountered by the pilgrim on his descent into Italy. The theatre and Arch of Augustus are Roman, the excavated remains of S. Lorenzo are Early Christian and the priory of S. Orso, with outstanding cloister capitals, is Romanesque. The cathedral dates from the 11th to the 16th centuries. In the afternoon drive through the Val d'Aosta to Fénis, a late mediaeval fortress-palace enlivened by frescoes of saints and sages. Overnight Aosta.

Day 3: Issogne, Ivrea, Vercelli. The 15th-century seigneurial castle of Issogne has an arcaded courtyard with paintings of daily life. Ivrea cathedral is an important early Romanesque building with twin campanili and mosaics. Vercelli is an attractive town in the Po plain with a splendid market square and the church of S. Andrea, begun in 1219 and displaying the earliest full-dress Gothic architecture in Italy. Overnight Pavia.

Day 4: Pavia. Pavia, strategically placed on the River Ticino, was with Milan the most important of Lombard cities, and has outstanding Romanesque churches. Little S. Teodoro has abundant 15th- and 16th-century wall paintings. S. Michele is famed for the delicate relief of its façade and S. Pietro in Ciel d'Oro, a major abbey church, contains the shrine of St Augustine. Castello Visconti, a splendid 14th-century palace, houses a good museum. To the north is the lavishly embellished Certosa di Pavia, Giangaleazzo Visconti's Carthusian monastery. Overnight Pavia.

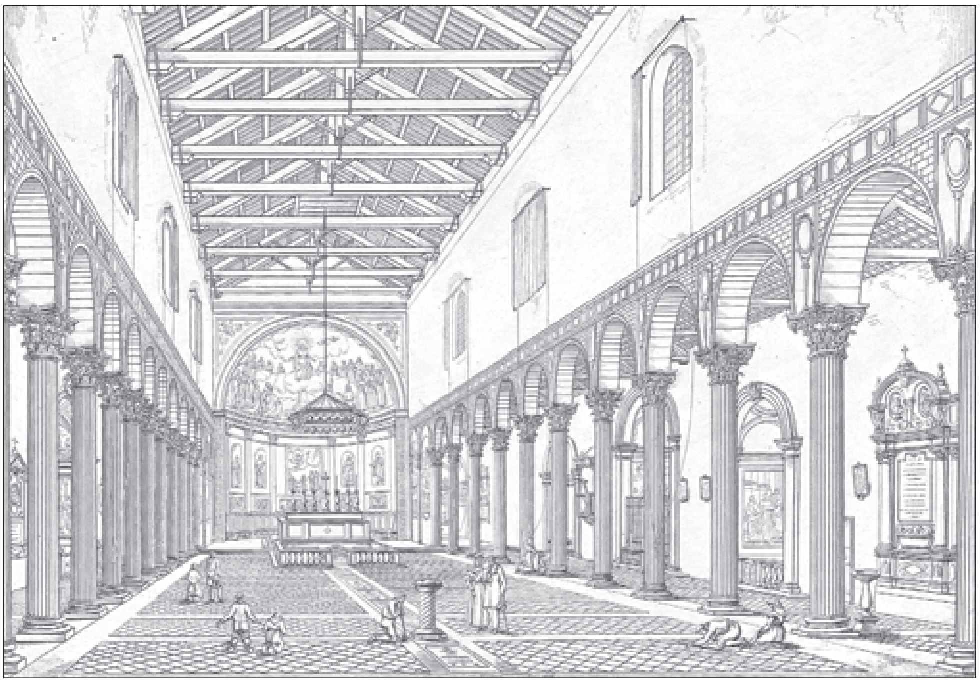
Day 5: Piacenza, Fidenza. Continue across the plain to Piacenza, whose cathedral is perhaps the grandest of all Lombard Romanesque churches. Visit the art gallery in the Palazzo Farnese. Fidenza has a majestic Romanesque cathedral built around the shrine of St Dominus with a frieze showing pilgrims processing to the city. Overnight Fidenza.

Day 6: Fornovo, Pontremoli, Sarzana. Rise up again through the Apennines. The little town of Fornovo di Taro has a Romanesque church with good 13th-century sculpture. Pontremoli is a walled town strategically sited where the pilgrimage route is still clear. Descend towards the coast and stop at Sarzana, which has an impressive cathedral with a 12th-century painted crucifix. Overnight Lucca.

Day 7: Lucca. This exceptionally well-preserved town has an enchanting streetscape, an array of superb Romanesque churches, with distinctive arcaded exteriors, outstanding mediaeval painting and a magnificent circuit of Renaissance ramparts. Among the churches are S. Frediano with mosaic façade and S. Martino, the cathedral, with a miracle-working wooden crucifixion and Jacopo della Quercia's exquisite tomb of Ilaria del Carretto. Visit San Giovanni Reparata, an early 12th-century Baptistery. Free afternoon, overnight Lucca.

Day 8: Volterra, San Gimignano. Drive to the rugged mediaeval hilltop town of Volterra, (which in the early Middle Ages claimed suzerainty over San Gimignano). Visit the Romanesque cathedral, which has fine Renaissance frescoes and sculpture. Pass through spellbinding hill landscape to San Gimignano, scarcely changed since the 14th century, with its intact city walls, astonishing clutch of grimly defensible tower houses and commanding views of the Tuscan countryside. The collegiate church was re-orientated in the 13th century to face the pilgrims' route and the interior fully painted in the 14th. The town hall has a superbly decorated council chamber. First of three nights in Siena.

Day 9: Siena. A full day in the grandest city to prosper along the Via Francigena in the Late Middle Ages. Walk through narrow, curving streets between towering palazzi with delicate Gothic fenestration. At the lowered apex of the scallop-shaped main 'square' rises the Palazzo Pubblico, the most complete mediaeval town hall to survive in Europe, and surely the most beautiful, containing some of the best of trecento frescoes. The Pinacoteca has an unrivalled collection of Sienese panel paintings and the cathedral museum has Duccio's *Maestà*, one of the finest painted altarpieces of the Middle Ages. The cathedral of banded green and white marble contains work by Pisani, Donatello and Ghiberti and Pinturicchio's brilliant frescoes in the Piccolomini library. Overnight Siena.



Day 10: Siena. A free day in Siena for further exploration and relaxation. Overnight Siena.

Day 11: S. Antimo, San Quirico d'Orcia, Montefiascone. A gentle drive through the hills of southern Tuscany. In remote countryside, the Benedictine monastery of S. Antimo is one of the most beautiful of Romanesque basilicas, with exquisitely decorated wall surfaces and capitals. Visit the small hill towns of S. Quirico d'Orcia and Montefiascone. Overnight Bolsena.

Day 12: Viterbo, Rome. Viterbo, principal city of northern Lazio and mid-13th-century residence of the Popes, has an extensive mediaeval heart. S. Francesco accommodates tombs of two popes and the Palazzo Papale is a 13th-century papal residence. S. Maria Nuova is a beautifully sculpted Romanesque church. The afternoon descent on Rome loops along the ancient Via Nomentana and brings us past S. Agnese Fuori le Mura, a magnificent complex of Early Christian structures and mosaics close to Rome's Aurelian walls. First of three nights in Rome.

Day 13: Rome. The three days in Rome concentrate on the buildings which would have been visited by the mediaeval pilgrim. The morning is spent on the Celian hill. See both S. Clemente, a superb double-decker superimposed above an even lower Imperial building, and SS. Quatro Coronati, a beautifully restored 13th-century rebuild. S. Stefano Rotondo is an immensely influential centrally-planned building. On the Esquiline Hill, S. Maria Maggiore, one of the four 'major basilicas' and substantially rebuilt in the 5th century, S. Prassede and S. Pudenziana all have fine mosaics.

Day 14: Rome. The Catacombs of Priscilla on the Via Salaria have a good number of the most important of Rome's Early Christian paintings. Included also is the Pantheon, mighty 2nd-century Imperial building subsequently rededicated to the Virgin Mary. S. Maria Sopra Minerva is the sole genuinely Gothic church in Rome. The afternoon is free.

Day 15: Rome. S. Sabina is the most beautiful, lucid and complete 5th-century church in western Europe. Via Appia, the consular route south, was the very 'queen of roads' according to Statius. Domine Quo Vadis is a chapel raised above a Roman mound to mark the spot where Christ appeared to Peter. Fly from Rome, arriving Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £4,240 (deposit £400). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 319); travel by private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 10 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission to museums, sites; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £680. Price without flights £4,070.**

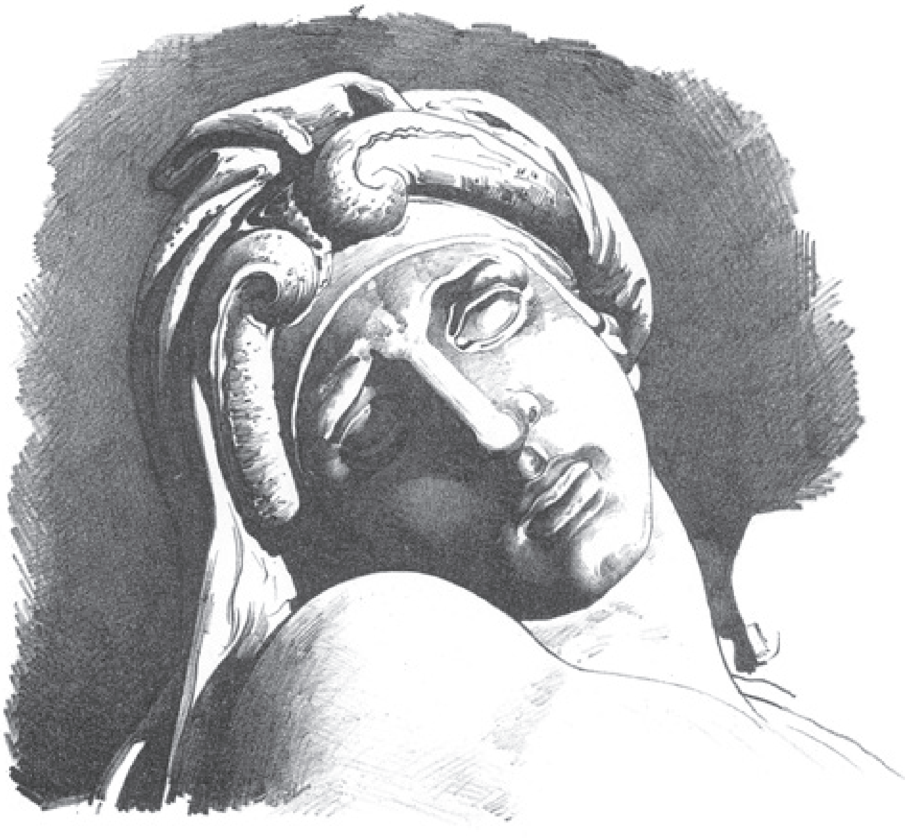
Hotels: in Aosta (2 nights): a 4-star hotel on the outskirts of the town with mountain views. In Pavia (2 nights): 4-star hotel, well-located in a busy street on the edge of the historic centre, good bedrooms. In Fidenza (1 night): a small 3-star hotel, rooms are spartan but spacious. In Lucca (2 nights): an excellently situated 4-star within the city walls. In Siena (3 nights): a luxury 5-star hotel housed in Palazzo Gori Pannilini, built in the 17th century for Pope Alexander VII. Rooms are elegantly and traditionally furnished. There is a good restaurant. In Bolsena (1 night): a refurbished 4-star hotel beside the lake. In Rome (3 nights): a delightful 5-star hotel in a 17th-century palazzo in a wonderful location just off the Via Condotti at the bottom of the Spanish Steps. Public rooms are relatively small but comfortable, while bedrooms are furnished in traditional style with antiques.

How strenuous? This is a long tour with six hotel changes and a lot of walking in town centres. It should not be undertaken by anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. The average distance by coach per day is 58 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

Illustrations. Far left: Pavia, after a drawing by Inglis Sheldon-Williams 1928; this page: Rome, S. Sabina, engraving c. 1840.

LEONARDO & MICHELANGELO



Michelangelo's *Dawn*, drawn by Valfredo Vizzotto 1936.

7–14 February 2012 (MY 167)
8 days • £3,100
Lecturers: Charles Nicholl
& Dr Joachim Strupp

A new tour for 2012.

A survey in Milan, Florence and Rome of works by the two Florentine masters.

Includes a major exhibition in Rome (and follows a Leonardo exhibition in London).

Led by both a biographer of Leonardo and a Renaissance art historian.

Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarrotti: Renaissance Men par excellence and two of art history's towering colossi. An obvious and compelling theme for a Martin Randall Travel tour, you might think; you may then wonder why, in over twenty-two years of existence, we have never, until now, undertaken such a tour. In short, a not altogether likely but surprisingly fruitful agreement between the Casa Buonarroti di Firenze and the Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana di Milano, the highly influential organizations that zealously protect the reputations of the two men, means that a number of comprehensive and authoritative exhibitions dedicated to these two titans of the Italian Renaissance will be held in various cities in Italy in 2011/12.

We have decided, therefore, to take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to create a one-off tour which will visit numerous permanently displayed works by Leonardo and Michelangelo before culminating in an afternoon visit to *Michelangelo e Leonardo: gli italiani prima dell'Italia* in the Capitoline Museum, a blockbuster temporary exhibition of both artists' drawings.

Milan: capital of the most powerful territory in Italy and, when Leonardo was employed there, probably the largest city in Europe. Florence: cradle of the Renaissance and home to an unrivalled quantity of first-rate, locally-produced works of art, many still in the sites for which they were created. Rome: ancient and papal capital and, as such, artistically the most richly endowed city on the planet. Three of Italy's most historic, vibrant and fascinating cities, each with a fundamental but distinctive role in the development of the Renaissance.

They are also the cities most closely identified with Leonardo and Michelangelo, and in them we will be spending eight, hugely-rewarding days exploring the lives and staggering achievements of these two polymaths and placing them within the wider context of their contemporaries, as well as enjoying some of humanity's finest cultural achievements, not least the *Last Supper,* the statue of David, and the Sistine Chapel.

The buildings that house the works of art are themselves of intrinsic historical or architectural interest, or are home to masterpieces by other artists. These range from some of the world's greatest galleries, including the Pinacoteca di Brera, the Uffizi and Bargello, to remarkable ecclesiastical edifices such as Sant' Ambrogio, the Vatican and the cathedrals of Milan and Florence.

Itinerary

Day 1: Milan. Fly at midday from London Heathrow to Milan. Spend the first of two nights in Milan.

Day 2: Milan. Visit the Brera, one of Italy's major picture collections. The refurbished Pinacoteca Ambrosiana has works by Raphael, Bramantino, Luini and other contemporaries and followers of Leonardo. In the afternoon, the first of two visits to Leonardo's *Last Supper.* The Dominican friary of S. Maria delle Grazie was lavishly endowed by Duke Ludovico Sforza in the 1490s, the consequences including Bramante's monumental eastern extension of the church and the *Last Supper* on the wall of the refectory. The Castello Sforzesco, the vast fortified palace of Leonardo's ducal patrons, has room decorations attributed to him and houses works of art and artefacts including Michelangelo's Rondandini *Pietà.*

Day 3: Milan, Florence. Sant'Ambrogio, built between the 4th and 11th centuries, is one of the most ancient and venerable churches in northern Italy, and contains a 9th-century gold altar frontal. Visit the Cenacolo Vinciano for a second viewing of Leonardo's *Last Supper* (there is a time limit for each visit). Some free time follows, perhaps to visit the spectacular Gothic cathedral with its filigree tracery and myriad pinnacles. In the afternoon, travel by first class rail to Florence for the first of three nights.

Day 4: Florence. The Accademia houses Michelangelo's colossal *David* and the four unfinished *'Prisoners'* intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II. Michelangelo's New Sacristy, the Medici burial chapel attached to S. Lorenzo, combines sculpture and architecture. He was also the designer of the Laurentian Library. In the afternoon, visit the Palazzo Vecchio for Michelangelo's *Victory* and the Uffizi (by appointment) for his *Doni Tondo* and several major works by Leonardo, including the *Annunciation* and *Adoration of the Magi*.

Day 5: Florence. The Casa Buonarroti, bought by Michelangelo for his nephew, is now a museum dedicated to the artist. The great sculpture museum in the Bargello possesses Michelangelo's *Bacchus*, *Brutus* and *Madonna and Child*. Explore the Cathedral Museum in the afternoon, including Michelangelo's *Pietà*, one of his last works and intensely moving.

Day 6: Rome. By first class rail to Rome. After some free time to settle in, head to the site of the ancient Roman Capitol, where Michelangelo created an architectural ensemble to house the city government. The Capitoline museums contain ancient sculpture and during the tour a special exhibition of rare drawings by the two masters. First of three nights in Rome.

Day 7: Rome. Spend the morning in St Peter's, the foremost church in Christendom, where Michelangelo was supervising architect from 1546 and which contains his early sculptural masterpiece, the *Pietà*. Other sculptures by Michelangelo are *The Risen Christ* in Sta Maria sopra Minerva and *Moses*, created for Pope Julius' tomb, in S. Pietro in Vincoli. In the evening there is a private visit to the Vatican Museums which contain Leonardo's *St Jerome in the Wilderness* and Raphael's *Transfiguration* and Sistine Chapel tapestries. See the Sistine Chapel itself to view at length and in peace Michelangelo's *Old Testament* ceiling frescoes and the *Last Judgement* on the altar wall.

Day 8: Rome. A free morning. Return to London Heathrow arriving at c. 6.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,100 (deposit £350). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 320/321); travel by private coach and first class rail; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturers. **Single supplement £420** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £2,940.**

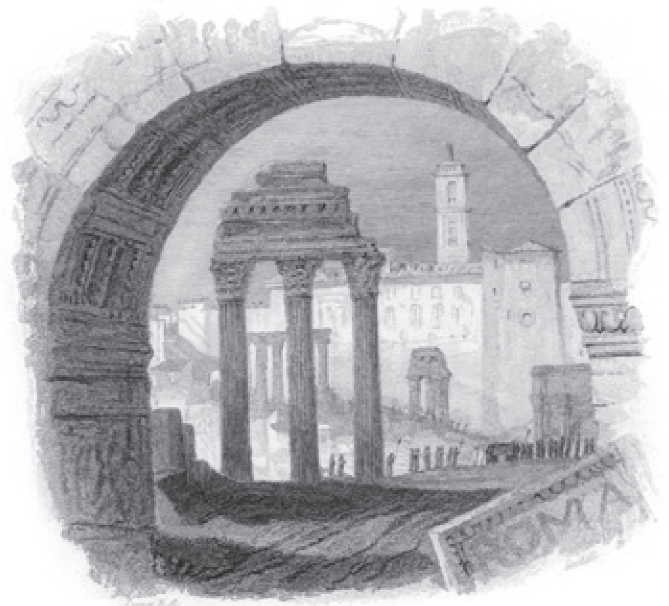
Hotels. In Milan (1 night): a smart, traditionally-furnished 4-star hotel close to the Duomo. In Florence (3 nights): a delightful, recently renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location with stylishly decorated rooms. In Rome (2 nights): a 5-star hotel in a 17th-century palazzo in a wonderful location just off the Via Condotti at the bottom of the Spanish Steps. Public rooms are relatively small but comfortable, while bedrooms are furnished in traditional style with antiques.

How strenuous? A lot of walking. This tour is not suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing. Historic centres are generally closed to traffic. Average distance by coach per day: 8 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

Ancient Rome

Art & architecture of the Classical World



Rome, engraving 1859
after J.M.W. Turner.

4–9 October 2012 (MZ 386)
6 days • £2,310
Lecturer: Angus Haldane

Comprehensive exploration of Rome's ancient remains, in situ and in museums.

Visits to Ostia and Tivoli outside the city.

Good 4-star hotel near Piazza Farnese.

When the Aurelian walls were built around Rome in the third century AD, the area enclosed was about fifty times that of Londinium and the present-day City of London. Rome's population at that time was around a million, a figure not surpassed by any city in the world until the nineteenth century (by which time the world's population had increased tenfold).

Such was the scale of ancient Rome – formidable to any modern city-dweller with a little historical imagination, awesome, incredible even, to most citizens and subjects of the Empire. The size was appropriate for the capital of an empire which stretched from Upper Egypt to the Cairngorms, and from Atlantic Africa to Babylon, but the impedimenta of imperial administration were not the sole determinants of its size and status. As a kernel from which the Empire grew, and protagonist in myth and history, it was a spiritual home for every Roman citizen, and the fount of civilization.

Of course, decline and fall ensued. Rome was relieved of responsibility for half the Empire when Constantinople was founded; it lost its capitular status first to Milan then to Ravenna; it was sacked by the Goths in AD 410. At one point during the Middle Ages the population shrunk to a hundredth of its ancient peak. As late as the nineteenth century the Forum was known as the Campo Vacchino because cows grazed among the ruins.

After more than a millennium of destruction it is surprising that so much remains. Again, the sheer scale impresses the observer, but so also does the extraordinary high level of skill in art and craft and construction, and the sophistication of a society which produced such accomplishments. This tour will look at the visible remains of Ancient Rome and bring them alive by placing them in the context of the tumultuous history and of everyday life, which reached peaks of refinement and ease while never banishing the lewd, violent and squalid.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.15am from London Heathrow to Rome. A drive devised to enable participants to grasp the scale and topography of the ancient city. See sections of the Aurelian wall and ancient gateways. Walk around the temples of the Largo Argentina, the Theatre of Marcellus and the Forum Boarium.

Day 2. Morning walk starting at the Mausoleum of Augustus, one of the most sacred monuments of Ancient Rome, and the Ara Pacis, Augustus' monumental altar of peace. The Pantheon is the most complete of Roman buildings to survive. The Forum Romanum, the civic, religious and social centre of ancient Rome, has the remains of many structures famed throughout the Empire. There is an optional walk along the Via dei Fori Imperiali, past Trajan's Column and Trajan's Market, a remarkable shopping centre.

Day 3. Visit the Colosseum, largest of ancient amphitheatres, and the Arch of Constantine, sculpturally the richest of triumphal arches. The Palatine Hill was the site of the luxurious palaces of successive emperors. In the afternoon visit the Capitoline Museums which have important collections of ancient sculpture.

Day 4. See the awesome bulk of the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. Drive to Ostia, the ancient port of Rome, comparable to Pompeii for its state of preservation.

Day 5. Drive to Tivoli to see Hadrian's Villa, designed entirely by him and inspired by sites he visited during his travels in the Empire, undoubtedly the richest building project in the Roman Empire. Lunch is in a good restaurant. There is some free time in Rome.

Day 6. Morning visit to the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, built on the site of the Baths of Diocletian. Palazzo Massimo, home to the majority of the National Roman Museum's collection, contains wonderful Roman frescoes and stuccoes. Return to London Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,310 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 320/321); private coach travel for transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners including wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £360** (double for sole occupancy). **Price without flights £2,100.**

Hotel: a 4-star hotel in an excellent location a short walk from Piazza Farnese and Trastevere. Bedrooms are furnished with traditional cherry wood furniture. There is a courtyard garden.

How strenuous? There is unavoidably quite a lot of walking. The historic area is vast, and vehicular access to the centre is increasingly restricted. A coach will be used on several occasions, but otherwise we go about on foot. Average distance by coach per day: 33 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

CONNOISSEUR'S ROME

WITH PRIVATE VISITS INCLUDING THE SISTINE CHAPEL

17–22 November 2011 (MY 117)
Contact us for details.

18–23 November 2011 (MY 120)
Contact us for details.

9–14 February 2012 (MY 165)
6 days • £2,450
Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Concentrates on places which are difficult to access or which are private.

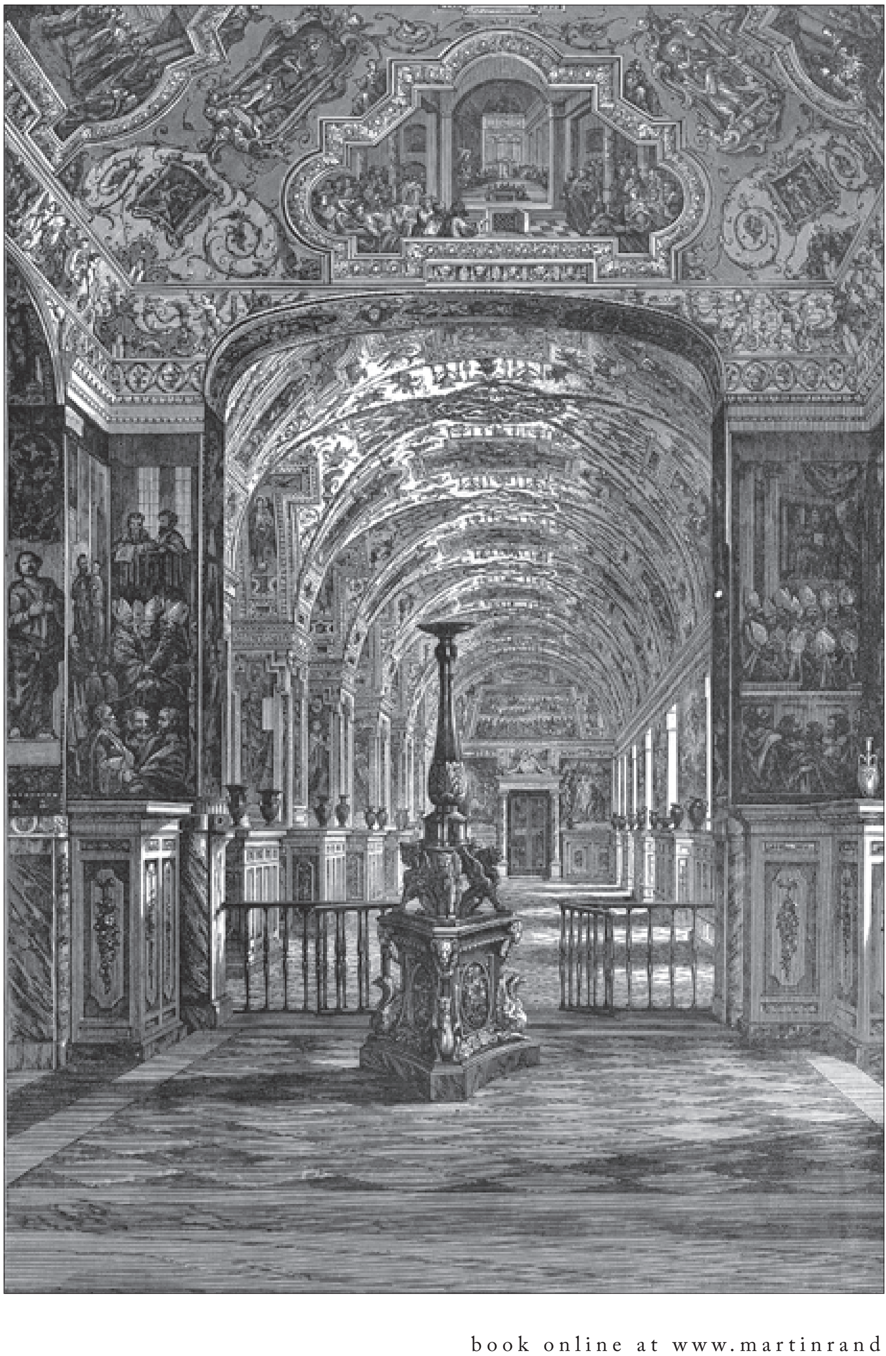
Out-of-hours visits to the Sistine Chapel.

Content mainly Renaissance and Baroque.

Many of Rome's artistic riches are not easily accessible to the visitor. The emphasis of this tour is on places which are difficult of access or are rarely open to the public – on treasures which lie beyond normally impenetrable portals.

Privileged access also takes the form of visits to places outside their normal opening hours. Instead of sharing the Sistine Chapel with hundreds of other visitors, Martin Randall Travel clients will have the place to themselves for a couple of hours.

What we manage to include varies each time we run this tour. Though it is likely that most of the places mentioned in the itinerary given below will be visited, arrangements depend on


The Vatican Library, wood engraving c. 1890.

the generosity of owners and institutions and are occasionally subject to cancellation, but our network of contacts and know-how would enable us to arrange alternatives.

Some well known and generally accessible places are included in the itinerary as well, so the tour should appeal both to those who are unfamiliar with the city as well as to those who have been many times before.

Itinerary for 2012

Day 1. Fly at c. 2.15pm from London Gatwick to Rome.

Day 2. See Bernini's oval church of S. Andrea, and in the monastery the rooms of St Stanislav Kostka with sculpture by Pierre Legros. The ceiling fresco by Guido Reni in the Casino dell'Aurora in the garden of the Palazzo Pallavicini Rospigliosi is one of the greatest works of 17th-century classicism. In the afternoon visit the early-Christian basilica San Clemente, notable for its three historical layers. The Sancta Sanctorum, adjacent to St John Lateran, part of the mediaeval papal residence, is decorated with Cosmati mosaics (1278).

Day 3. The Palazzo della Cancelleria, begun in 1485 by Cardinal Raffaele Riario, is a masterpiece of Early Renaissance secular architecture and has frescoes by Vasari of the life of Pope Paul III. The Palazzo Colonna is an agglomeration of building and decoration of many centuries, and has a collection which includes works by Bronzino, Titian, Veronese and Guercino. The 17th-cent. Great Hall is one of the most magnificent secular rooms in Rome. Palazzo Doria Pamphilj holds a famous picture collection. S. Ignazio has illusionistic ceiling painting by Andrea del Pozzo.

Day 4. By special arrangement, visit the 16th-century Villa Medici, now the seat of the French Academy. Study several of Caravaggio's works; S. Luigi dei Francesi with Caravaggio's *St Matthew* series and the nearby church of S. Agostino, with his *Madonna di Loreto*. The Castel Sant'Angelo, The mausoleum of Hadrian, has wonderful 16th-century papal apartments.

Day 5. An early morning, in-depth look at St Peter's, the foremost church in Christendom, to which so many of Rome's greatest architects and artists contributed. Within the private precincts of the Order of the Knights of Malta is a church by G.B. Piranesi. Return to the Vatican City in the evening for a private visit to the Vatican palace to see the Sistine Chapel and the adjacent Stanze. With Michelangelo's ceiling fresco, his *Last Judgement* on the end wall and the quattrocento wall frescoes, together with Raphael's frescoes in the Stanze, this is the most precious assemblage of painting in the western world.

Day 6. The Villa Madama (now used for diplomatic receptions), designed by Raphael and Antonio da Sangallo the younger for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, is one of the most important, as well as most beautiful, of Italian Renaissance villas. The delightful Villa La Farnesina has frescoes by Raphael. Return to London Gatwick at c. 8.00pm.

This gives a fair picture of the tour, but there may be substitutes for some places mentioned and the order of visits will probably differ.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £2,450 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Airbus 320); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions, including a private visit to the Vatican Museums; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £400. Price without flights £2,310.**

Hotel: a delightful 5-star hotel in a 17th-century palazzo in a wonderful location just off the Via Condotti at the bottom of the Spanish Steps. Public rooms are relatively small but comfortable, while bedrooms are furnished in traditional style with antiques.

How strenuous? Despite the central location of the hotel there is unavoidably a lot of walking. The historic area is vast, and vehicular access is increasingly restricted. A coach is used on some occasions but otherwise we get about on foot. Average distance by coach per day: 8 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

CARAVAGGIO

17–23 October 2011 (MY 993)
7 days • £2,760
Lecturer: Dr Helen Langdon

Unhurried appreciation of the finest painter of the Italian Baroque, in the company of his foremost biographer.

Sixteen Caravaggio canvasses in all: eleven in some of Italy's greatest art museums, four in their original chapels, and one in private hands.

First class rail travel between Milan and Rome.

This tour is nearly full.
Contact us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

ROME: A FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

November 2012.
Contact us now to register your interest.

Right: singers, 18th-century etching after Guercino.

POMPEII & HERCULANEUM

ANTIQUITIES OF THE BAY OF NAPLES

19–24 March 2012 (MY 189)
6 days • £1,620
Lecturer: Angus Haldane

10–15 October 2012 (MZ 391)
6 days • £1,620
Lecturer: Angus Haldane

15–20 October 2012 (MZ 388)
6 days • £1,620
Lecturer: Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves

Perhaps the most exciting tour possible dealing with Roman archaeology.

The two principal sites buried by the AD 79 eruption of Vesuvius plus Greek Paestum and the Naples Archaeological Museum.

Lesser-visited sites such as Cumae and Pozzuoli.

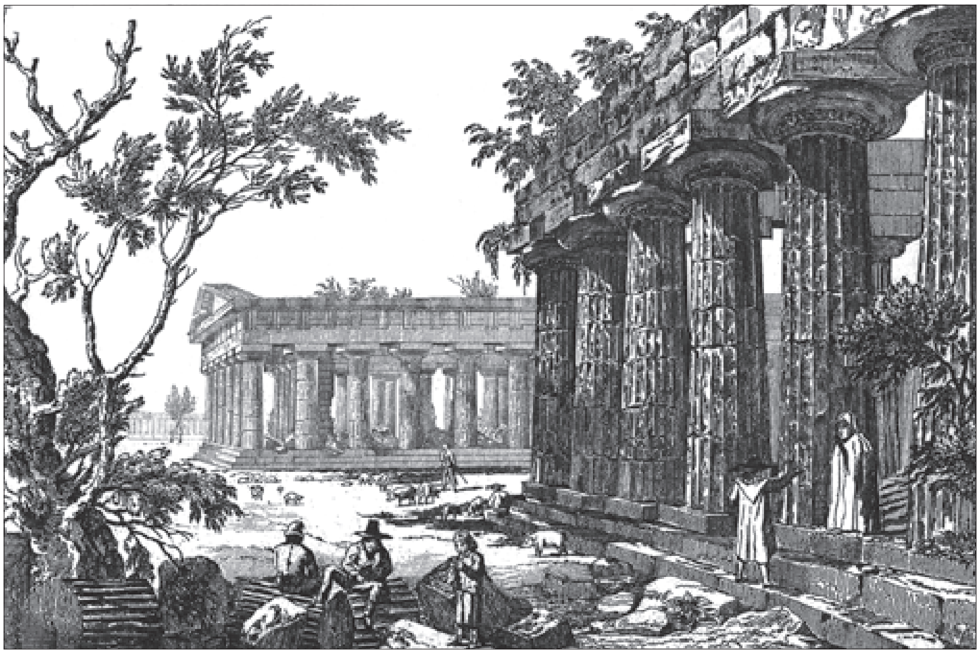
Campania's felicitous climate, fertile soil and natural harbours have attracted settlers since ancient times. Prosperity invariably ensued. The Greeks founded some of their earliest colonies here, among them Naples and Paestum, the site of the latter preserving three of the most complete Doric temples to be found anywhere.

Campania was one of the most favoured areas in the Roman Empire. To the riches generated by trade, agriculture and naval dockyards there were added the proceeds of leisure industries as it became a holiday destination for wealthy citizens from Rome. Some of the most desirable towns and private villas in the peninsula were built here.

However, the infamous eruption in AD 79 of Mount Vesuvius completely buried two busy and salubrious towns on the Bay of Naples, Pompeii and Herculaneum, one with volcanic ash and the other with mud.

Paradoxically, this sudden obliteration preserved the towns with a level of completeness which has no parallel with any other archaeological site in the world.

Excavation has revealed them almost in their entirety, providing a unique insight into everyday life in the Roman Empire. Even the smallest and most fragile objects of daily use have survived, along with wall paintings, floor mosaics, precious jewellery and household utensils. The immediacy and vividness with which the imagination is able to grasp a past civilization is startling and unique.



Paestum, engraving c. 1840.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 2.15pm from London Gatwick to Naples. Drive to Vico Equense where all five nights are spent.

Day 2: Oplontis, Paestum. Visit the newly excavated villa at Torre Annunziata (ancient Oplontis), which may have been the home of Poppaea, wife of Nero, one of the loveliest of ancient sites, with rich wall paintings and a swimming pool. Paestum was a major Greek settlement and is one of the most interesting archaeological sites in Italy. Three outstanding Greek Doric temples stand in a remarkable state of preservation. The excellent museum has a very rare ancient Greek painting and early metopes.

Day 3: Cumae, Baia, Pozzuoli. Spend the day around the Bay of Naples to some little-visited but exciting sites. Cumae was the first Greek settlement on mainland Italy. The archaeological museum of the Phlegraean fields in Baia has interesting marble and bronze statues from the Imperial period. The port of Pozzuoli with a well-preserved amphitheatre and market.

Day 4: Pompeii. Drive to the site of ancient Pompeii. Since the first excavations in the 18th century, it has been one of the world's most famous archaeological digs. The fascination of the site lies not only in the major public buildings such as the theatre, temples and the forum but also in the numerous domestic dwellings, from cramped apartments to luxurious villas.

Day 5: Naples, Herculaneum. The Archaeological Museum in Naples has one of the finest collections in the world, and is the principal repository for movable objects excavated at Pompeii and Herculaneum. At Herculaneum, engulfed by mud rather than ash, timber and other combustibles are better preserved. A smaller settlement consisting largely of villas for the well-to-do, private dwellings are the centre of interest.

Day 6: Vico Equense. There is some free time this morning. Fly from Naples to Gatwick, arriving c. 1.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,620 (deposit £200); this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 319); private coach for transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 picnic (2 in Sept/Oct 2011) and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer; local guide where required. **Single supplement £110** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £1,520.**

Hotel: in Vico Equense, a pleasant resort, less touristy than others along this coast, very convenient for the places visited: a simple, friendly 3-star; in need of renovation, rooms vary in size, decor and outlook; terrace and views of the sea.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, some of it over the rough ground of sites. Sure-footedness is essential. The average distance by coach per day is 65 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

NORMANS IN THE SOUTH

CASTLES & CATHEDRALS IN PUGLIA & CAMPAGNA

20–28 March 2012 (MY 188)
9 days • £2,170
Lecturer: John McNeill

9–17 October 2012 (MZ 394)
9 days • £2,210
Lecturer: to be confirmed

Splendid Romanesque architecture, largely built by Norman conquerors.

Also later mediaeval buildings from the Hohenstaufen and Angevin dynasties, with moments of later flamboyant Baroque.

Attractive town centres and striking raw limestone landscapes.

Very much an architectural history tour.

The Norman conquest of southern Italy was one of the most remarkable episodes in mediaeval history. Whereas England was subjugated by a sizeable and highly organised Norman army, the 'Kingdom in the Sun' was won by small bands of soldiers of fortune. They trickled in during the eleventh century when the tangled political situation and incessant feuding made the area ripe for exploitation by ambitious knights in search of adventure and personal gain.

By the end of the century they had expelled the Byzantines from the mainland and the Saracens from Sicily, and by 1127 all Sicily and southern Italy was ruled by one Norman king.

This cosmopolitan kingdom was one of the best administered and most culturally sophisticated in Europe. As in England, in the wake of conquest there arose splendid new churches of unprecedented size and grandeur. A mixture of French, Lombard, Byzantine, Saracenic and ancient Roman elements, south Italian Romanesque is one of the most distinct and beautiful of the variants of this truly international style.

Prosperity and creativity continued after the extinction of the Norman dynasty in 1194 by the Hohenstaufen from Germany. In the first half of the thirteenth century the region was dominated by the extraordinary Emperor Frederick II, 'Stupor Mundi', 'Wonder of the World'. He was as courageous and ambitious in artistic and intellectual spheres as he was in administration, diplomacy and war.

Much later there was another artistic outburst, appropriately international but characteristically idiosyncratic: a highly elaborate version of Baroque architecture and decoration.

The heel and spur of boot-shaped Italy, Apulia is remote from the better-known parts of the peninsula, and its raw limestone landscape wholly different from the silky richness of central and northern Italy. The last day of the tour is spent across the Apennines in Campania. This region presents another face of Italy, distinctly southern but with an equally cosmopolitan and pan-Mediterranean cultural history.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 12.30pm from London Heathrow to Brindisi, via Rome, and drive on to Lecce. First of three nights in Lecce.

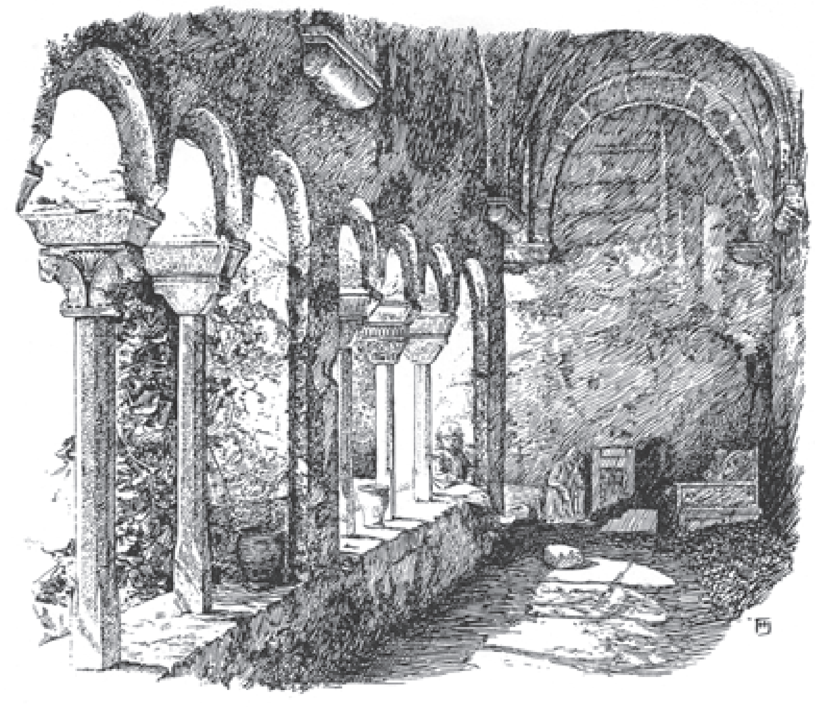
Day 2: Casarano, Gallipoli, Otranto. Explore the Salentine Peninsula, the southernmost tip of the heel of Italy. Churches visited include Sta Maria di Cerrate (12th-century Romanesque complex) and Casarano (5th-century mosaics and frescoes). Gallipoli was the centre of Byzantine Italy until conquered by the Normans in 1071; the old town is on an off-shore island. Otranto, captured by Normans in 1068, has a cathedral with outstanding 12th-century floor mosaics.

Day 3: Lecce. Lecce is distinguished by an elaborate style of Baroque and Rococo decoration wrought in the soft, honey-coloured tufa of the region, the outstanding examples being the cathedral and the church of Sta Croce. See also the Norman church of SS Nicolò e Cataldo, founded by Tancred, and the Roman theatre. The afternoon is free.

Day 4: Brindisi, Bitonto. Possessing the safest natural harbour on the Adriatic, the provincial capital of Brindisi has been of intermittent strategic importance for over twenty-four centuries. Visits include the Romanesque churches of Sta Maria del Casale, with Byzantine frescoes and polychrome façade, and San Benedetto. Bitonto has one of the finest of Romanesque cathedrals with good sculpture and an Early Christian lower church. Continue to Trani where the next four nights are spent.

Day 5: Bari, Trani. Bari, capital of Apulia, has an extensive and unspoilt mediaeval quarter beside the sea. The Basilica of S. Nicola, begun in 1087, is not only the first but also the greatest of Apulian Romanesque churches; the episcopal throne here is remarkable. Also visit the cathedral (1170) and later mediaeval Angevin castle. Back in Trani, visit the magically beautiful Romanesque cathedral on the waterfront.

Day 6: Castel del Monte, Barletta. Castel del Monte, situated on an isolated peak, is Frederick II's extraordinarily sophisticated hunting lodge and one of the most intriguing secular buildings of the Middle Ages. Barletta has a castle, cathedral, bust of Frederick II and



Brindisi, S. Benedetto, engraving c. 1900 from *The Shores of the Adriatic, The Italian Side*.

NAPLES

ART, ANTIQUITIES & OPERA

May 2012
Full details available October 2011.
Contact us to register your interest.

a colossal antique bronze statue. There is some free time in Trani.

Day 7: Canosa, Troia, Melfi, Venosa. Canosa di Puglia has an 11th-century cathedral and the tomb of Bohemond. Troia is a lovely town with a Pisan-style Romanesque cathedral. The hilltop town of Melfi was for a while the main centre of Norman power in Italy. The impressive but unfinished monastery of La Trinità at Venosa was built from the 12th century over an early Christian church.

Day 8: Benevento, Salerno. Cross the Apennines to Campagna. Benevento was a strategic Roman colonia, Lombard Duchy and Norman from 1081. The arch of Trajan is one of the finest surviving Roman triumphal arches. Sta Sofia has a magnificent 12th-century cloister. The seaport of Salerno has an 11th-century cathedral with a fine sculpted portal and a 12th-century ivory altarpiece. Overnight Vico Equense.

Day 9: St Angelo in Formis. The Basilica of St Angelo in Formis has outstanding 11th-century frescoes. Fly from Rome to London, arriving Heathrow at c. 7.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,170 (March), **£2,210** (Oct.) (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Alitalia flights (aircraft: Airbus 321); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all taxes; all gratuities for restaurant staff, drivers and guides; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £320**. **Price without flights £2,000** (March), **£2,040** (Oct.).

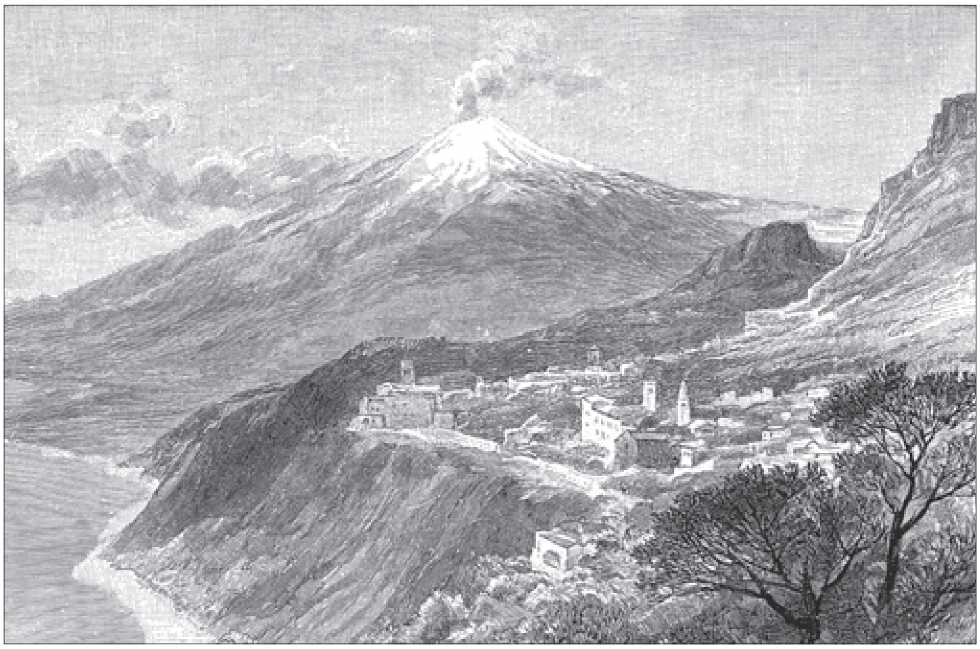
Hotels: in Lecce (3 nights): a stylish 5-star hotel in an excellent location near the church of Sta Croce in the historic centre. Rooms are spacious and elegantly furnished. In Trani (4 nights): a charming 4-star hotel converted from a 15th-century convent with wonderful views of the harbour and cathedral, although service and maintenance are not always quite up to North European standards. In Vico Equense (1 night): a pleasant resort, less touristy than others along this coast. A simple, friendly 3-star, rooms vary in size, decor and outlook; there is a terrace and views of the sea. Dinners are in the hotels or selected restaurants

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour, some of it over rough ground. The average distance by coach per day is 88 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

SICILY

CENTRE OF MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS



Taormina, wood engraving 1891.

3–15 October 2011 (MY 977)
This tour is currently full.

31 October–12 November 2011 (MY 116)
13 days • £3,720
Lecturer: Christopher Newall

19–31 March 2012 (MY 186)
13 days • £3,860
Lecturer: Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves

24 September–6 October 2012 (MZ 377)
13 days • £3,860
Lecturer: Christopher Newall

Covers the whole island, including the main sights and many lesser-known ones.

The whole gamut – Ancient Greek, Roman, mediaeval (particularly Norman), Renaissance, Baroque and later.

A full tour but carefully paced. Hotel changes kept to a minimum – only three hotels in thirteen days.

By virtue of both size and location, Sicily is the pre-eminent island in the Mediterranean. It is the largest, and it is also close to the sea's centre, a stepping stone between Europe and Africa and a refuge between the Levant and the Atlantic.

The result is that throughout history Sicily has been viewed as a fortuitous landfall by migrating peoples and a prized possession by ambitious adventurers and expansionist princes. And as the Mediterranean has been catalyst and disseminator of a greater variety of civilizations than any other of the world's seas, the island has acquired an exceptionally rich encrustation of art and architecture and archaeological remains.

For the Phoenicians, Sicily was a nodal point in their far-reaching trading empire, but from the seventh century BC they were increasingly displaced by colonies established by the Greeks. Exploiting the enormous potential of the island, these rapidly outpaced their rugged home territories to become the most prosperous of all Hellenic colonies. At Segesta and Agrigento there survive some of the finest standing Doric temples to be seen anywhere.

Great wealth accrued under Roman rule when the island was clothed in fields of corn, and endless oak forests and abundant fauna provided sport for grandees and emperors. One of them has bequeathed to us on the floor of his luxurious villa the most splendid Roman mosaics to have survived. Overrun by Germanic barbarians in the fifth century, Sicily was wrested back for the twilight of classical civilization by the Byzantines, but at the cost of military campaigns which devastated the island.

Byzantine rule was in turn supplanted from the ninth century by Muslim Arabs, and a period of prosperity and advanced civilization ensued. Two hundred years later Arab rule was swept aside by conquering Normans, who by succumbing to the luxuriant sophistication of their predecessors distanced themselves as far as is imaginable from their rugged northern roots. The unique artistic blend of this golden age survives in the Romanesque churches with details of Norman, Saracenic, Levantine and classical origin. Byzantine mosaicists were much employed. The wealth and power of Sicily began to wane again from the later Middle Ages as a succession of German, French and Spanish dynasties exploited the island with colonial disregard for long-term interests, but pockets of wealth and creativity remained as Gothic and Renaissance masterpieces demonstrate. Artistically, however, a final flourish was reached in the Age of Baroque which saw the erection of churches and palaces as splendid and exuberant as anywhere in Europe.

The raw beauty of the landscape changes continually across the island. The Sicilians can be as welcoming as Italians anywhere, but the island continues to retain its enigmas, and differences with the mainland sometimes seem profound.

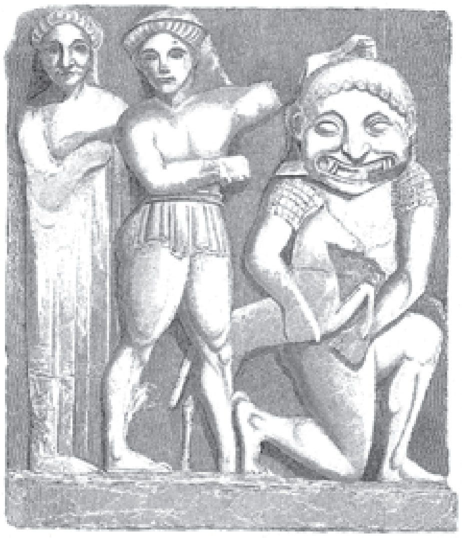
There may be itinerary changes due to closures for restoration work which happen fairly frequently in Sicily.

Itinerary

Day 1: Palermo. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow, via Milan, to Palermo, the largest and by far the most interesting city on the island; capital of Sicily from the period of Saracenic occupation in the 9th century, it reached a peak under the Normans and again during the Age of Baroque. First of six nights in Palermo.

Day 2: Palermo. Morning walk through the old centre includes a visit to several oratories and outstanding Norman buildings include the Martorana and San Cataldo with fine mosaics. Drinks at a private palace, usually closed to the public. In the afternoon see the excellent collection of pictures in the 15th-century Palazzo Abatellis. Overnight Palermo.

Day 3: Monreale, Cefalù. Monreale dominates a verdant valley west of Palermo, and its cathedral is one of the finest Norman churches with the largest scheme of mosaic decoration to survive from the Middle Ages. Cefalù, a charming coastal town, has a massive Norman cathedral with outstanding mosaics and an art gallery with painting by Antonello da Messina. Overnight Palermo.



Low-relief sculpture from Selinute, engraving c. 1840.

Day 4: Segesta, Selinunte. With its magnificently sited temple and theatre, Segesta is one of the most evocative of Greek sites. Selinunte, founded c. 650 BC is a vast archaeological site, renowned for its well-preserved temples on the eastern hill and the acropolis. Return to Palermo.

Day 5: Agrigento. A full day in Agrigento to see the 'Valley of the Temples', one of the finest of all ancient Greek sites, with two virtually complete Doric temples, other ruins and a good museum. Overnight Palermo.

Day 6: Palermo. Visit the 12th-century Palace of the Normans, containing the Palatine Chapel and Hall of King Roger, both with outstanding mosaics. S. Giovanni degli Eremiti is a Norman church with five cupolas and a charming garden. The cathedral, a building of many periods, has grand royal and imperial tombs. Free afternoon. Overnight Palermo.

Day 7: Palermo, Piazza Armerina. In Palermo visit the Zisa, an Arab-Norman Palace. Drive through the interior of Sicily. At Piazza Armerina are the remains of one of the most sumptuous villas of the late-Roman Empire, whose floor mosaics comprise the most vital and colourful manifestation of Roman figurative art in Europe. Continue across the island for the first of four nights in Taormina.

Day 8: Taormina. Visit the famed Roman theatre, with spectacular views over the sea to Calabria and inland to Mount Etna, an active volcano. The rest of the day free: one of the earliest and still one of the most attractive of Mediterranean resorts, Taormina has an area of secluded beaches joined by funicular to the delightful hilltop town. Overnight Taormina.

Day 9: Messina, Reggio di Calabria. North to Messina to see the Romanesque cathedral, Baroque fountain and the art gallery with paintings by Caravaggio and Antonello da Messina. Cross by ferry to Reggio di Calabria on the mainland of Italy and see the Riace Bronzes, over–life–size male nudes possibly by Phidias, and among the finest Greek sculpture to survive. Overnight Taormina.

Day 10: Catania. Drive along the coast to Catania, with a fine Baroque centre. Here there are special visits to a private palazzo and a Byzantine chapel, where we have a light lunch with tasters of local produce. Free afternoon. Overnight Taormina.

Day 11: Noto, Syracuse. Rebuilt after an earthquake in 1693, Noto is one of the loveliest and most homogenous Baroque towns in Italy. Founded as a Greek colony in 733 BC, Syracuse became the most important city of Magna Græcia. Overnight Syracuse.

Day 12: Syracuse. Walk on the island of Ortygia, the picturesque and densely built original centre of Syracuse and see the Caravaggio painting in the church of Santa Lucia alla Badia. Visit the 5th-century BC Greek theatre, the largest of its type to survive, the stone quarries and the Roman amphitheatre. Overnight Syracuse.

Day 13: Syracuse. Visit the excellent museum of antiquities in Syracuse. Fly from Catania, via Rome, to London, arriving Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,720 (2011), **£3,860** (2012) (deposit £350). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Alitalia flights (Boeing 737); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, five lunches (including one picnic) and seven dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission charges to museums, sites, etc.; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers, guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £720** (2011), **£580** (2012). **Price without flights £3,600** (2011), **£3,640** (2012).

Hotels: Palermo (6 nights): a 16th-century palazzo renovated to become a 4-star hotel in the centre, furnished to a high standard. Taormina (4 nights): a 3-star, charming, family-run hotel, in the old town, with its own garden (rooms vary in size and outlook). Syracuse (2 nights): a 4-star hotel, centrally situated on the island of Ortygia.

How strenuous? A lot of walking, some of it over rough ground at archaeological sites and cobbled or uneven paving. Fitness and sure-footedness are essential. Some long journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 69 miles.

Small group: 12 to 22 participants.

PALERMO

ART, ARCHAEOLOGY & ARCHITECTURE

One of the most fascinating cities in Italy, much improved recently.

Includes access to private palaces and to places outside public opening hours.

Excursions to several other towns and sites in western Sicily: Cefalù, Bagheria, Monreale, Segesta.

Sicily's heritage of art, architecture and archaeological remains is exceptionally rich and varied, and Palermo is by far the most interesting of the island's cities. Staying here for all six nights (seven for the two Christmas departures), the tour also has excursions to some of the best of the island's patrimony outside the city.

Ancient classical remains are prominent, with some of the finest standing Doric temples to be seen anywhere at Segesta and Agrigento. In the ninth century AD, when Byzantine rule was supplanted by that of Muslim Arabs, Palermo became the leading city on the island and famous throughout Europe for the beauty of its hillside position, its tradition of craftsmanship and its enlightened administration.

In the 11th century, Arab rule was swept aside by conquering Normans. By succumbing to the luxuriant sophistication of their predecessors they distanced themselves as far as is imaginable from their rugged northern roots. From a Palermo-based cosmopolitan court they ruled with efficiency and tolerance an affluent and cultured nation.

The unique artistic blend of this golden age survives in the Romanesque churches with details of Norman, Saracenic, Levantine and classical origin. Byzantine mosaicists were extensively employed, and more wall and vault mosaics survive here than in all of Byzantium. The tour includes not only the Norman buildings in Palermo but also the cathedrals at Cefalù and Monreale.

The prosperity and power of Sicily began to wane from the later Middle Ages, but pockets of wealth and creativity remained, as Gothic and Renaissance creations demonstrate. Artistically, however, a final flourish was reached in the Age of Baroque when churches and palaces were erected in Palermo and throughout the island which are as splendid and exuberant as anywhere in Europe.

Always a seething, vibrant city, enlightened local government has made Palermo cleaner, safer, and altogether more enjoyable than even a few years ago.

The tour includes a number of special arrangements to gain access to private palaces or visit buildings outside opening hours.

PALERMO AT CHRISTMAS

20–27 December 2011 (MY 139)
8 days • £2,520
Lecturer: Christopher Newall

21–28 December 2011 (MY 138)
8 days • £2,520
Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow to Palermo, via Milan. Overnight in Palermo where all seven nights are spent.

Day 2: Palermo. Outstanding Norman buildings this morning include the Martorana with fine mosaics. Visit also the cathedral, a building of many periods, with royal and imperial tombs. Visit a private palace and dinner here by special arrangement.

Day 3: Agrigento. A full day excursion to Agrigento to see the 'Valley of the Temples', one of the finest of all ancient Greek sites, with two virtually complete Doric temples, other ruins, and superb archaeological museum.

Day 4: Palermo. A morning walk through the old centre includes visits to several oratories and an excellent collection of pictures in the 15th-century Palazzo Abatellis. The Archaeological Museum (part closed for restoration) has material, especially Greek sculpture, from all over Sicily. A free afternoon is followed by a reception in a private palazzo, with astonishing Rococo interiors and original furnishings (used by Visconti for 'The Leopard').

Day 5, Christmas Day: Segesta, Palermo. In the morning drive to Segesta, one of the most evocative of ancient Greek sites, with magnificently sited temple and theatre. Back in Palermo, Christmas lunch is in a local restaurant.

Day 6: Monreale. Monreale dominates a verdant valley south of Palermo, and its cathedral is one of the finest Norman churches with the largest scheme of mosaic decoration that survives from the Middle Ages. Visit the Castello di Zisa in the afternoon, an Arab-Norman Palace.

Day 7: Cefalù, Bagheria. Cefalù, a charming coastal town, has a massive Norman cathedral with outstanding mosaics. Bagheria on the fringes of Palermo is a district of aristocratic Baroque and Neo-Classical villas. The remarkable if faded Villa Palagonia has a fine external staircase and is adorned with grotesque statuary.

Day 8: Palermo. Before leaving Palermo, the extraordinary 12th-century Palace of the Normans, containing the Palatine Chapel and Hall of King Roger, both with outstanding mosaics. The Norman church of S. Giovanni degli Eremiti has five cupolas and a garden. Fly from Palermo to London Heathrow, via Rome, arriving c. 7.15pm.

Practicalities

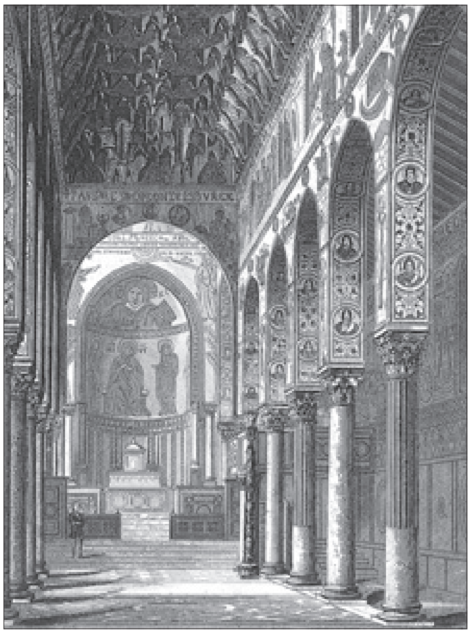
Price: £2,520 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on Alitalia flights (Airbus 320); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners (including one in a private palace), all with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £320** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,330.**

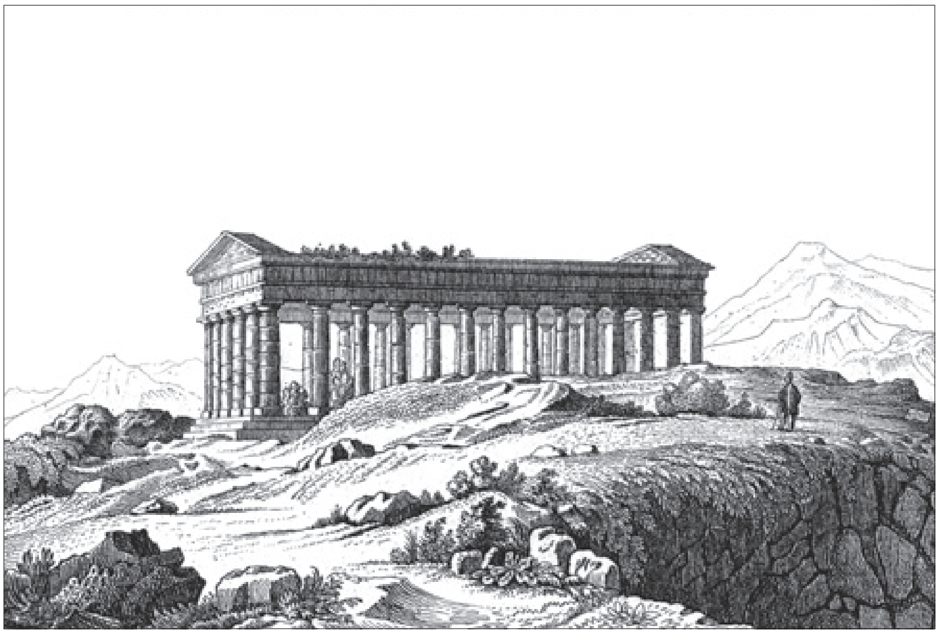
Hotel. The two tour groups stay in two very similar hotels in Palermo in the centre of town. Both are 16th-century palazzi converted into 4-star hotels. Rooms combine classical furnishings with modern comforts and both hotels have a restaurant.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour, some of it over rough ground at archaeological sites and in the historic centres. It is not suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 49 miles.

Weather. Winter weather in Palermo can be balmy and dry, but visitors should allow for the possibility of low temperatures and some rain.

Small group: between 10 and 20 participants.





PALERMO REDISCOVERED

13–19 November 2011 (MY 115)
This tour is currently full.

18–24 November 2012 (MZ 424)
7 days • £2,260
Lecturer: Christopher Newall

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 12.30pm from London Heathrow to Palermo, via Rome. Overnight Palermo where all six nights are spent.

Day 2: Palermo. A morning walk through the old centre includes a visit to several oratories. La Martorana and San Cataldo are two outstanding Norman buildings. Visit the Chiesa del Gesù, an extraordinary example of Palermitan Baroque with a profusion of marble inlay, stucco and sculpture.

Day 3: Cefalù, Bagheria. Cefalù, a charming coastal town, has a massive Norman cathedral with outstanding mosaics and an art gallery with paintings by Antonello da Messina. Visit the Greek temple of Himera, and Bagheria, just outside Palermo, which has a series of Baroque and neo-classical villas of nobility. The remarkable but faded Villa Palagonia has a fine external staircase and is adorned with grotesque statuary.

Day 4: Monreale, Palermo. Monreale dominates a verdant valley west of Palermo, and its cathedral is one of the finest Norman churches with the largest scheme of mosaic direction to survive from the Middle Ages. In the afternoon visit the Castello della Zisa, an Arab-Norman palace, recently restored. Dinner in a private palace.

Day 5: Palermo. In the morning, explore the Palace of the Normans, containing the Palatine Chapel (private visit) and Hall of King Roger, both with outstanding mosaics. Visit S. Giovanni degli Eremiti, a Norman church with five cupolas and a garden, and the cathedral, a building of many periods, with royal and imperial tombs. The afternoon is spent at the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia (Palazzo Abatellis), which has an excellent collection of 15th–cent. pictures.

Day 6: Segesta, Palermo. One of the most evocative of ancient Greek sites, Segesta has a magnificently sited temple and theatre. Free afternoon in Palermo. In the evening, there is a visit and reception by special arrangement to an otherwise inaccessible palazzo, with astonishing Rococo interiors and many original furnishings (used in Visconti's *The Leopard*).

Day 7. Fly from Palermo to London Heathrow, via Milan, arriving c. 6.00pm.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £2,260 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Alitalia flights (Airbus 321); coach travel throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee, including one at a private palace; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £180** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £2,070.**

Hotel: A 16th-century palazzo renovated to become a 4-star hotel in the centre of Palermo, furnished to a high standard. Rooms combine classical furnishings with modern comforts. There is a terrace with views over the city. Dinners are in the hotel or selected restaurants.

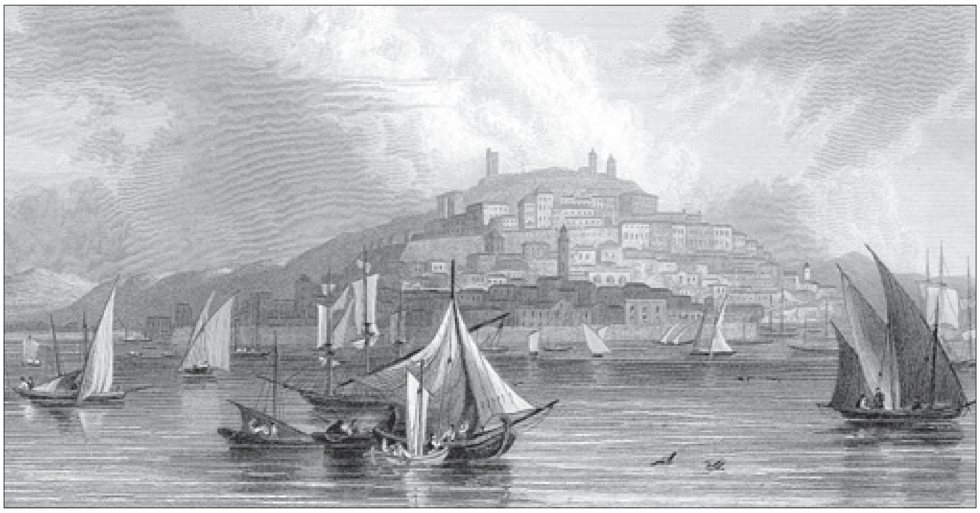
How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, sometimes over the rough terrain of archaeological sites. This tour not suitable for those with walking difficulties. Average distance by coach per day: 54 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

Illustrations. Top left: Palermo, Palatine Chapel, engraving c. 1860; top right: Segesta, engraving c. 1840.

Sardinia

Treasures of archaeology, architecture & art amid glorious landscapes



Cagliari, Sardinia, late-19th-century engraving from *Gazetteer of the World, Vol II.*

8–17 May 2012 (MY 234)
10 days • £2,220
Lecturer: Dr Roberto Cobianchi

11–20 September 2012 (MZ 365)
10 days • £2,220
Lecturer: Dr Roberto Cobianchi

A new tour for 2012.

Includes the best of the island's material culture, from Neolithic and Bronze Age, through Punic and Roman to mediaeval and Renaissance.

The unique Bronze Age *nuraghi* are a striking feature, as are Tuscan-style Romanesque churches and 16th-century Catalan altarpieces.

Wonderful mix of landscape, craggy mountain ranges, unspoilt rural regions, dramatic coasts.

Despite being the second largest island in the Mediterranean, Sardinia's cultural treasures remain largely undiscovered by travellers. Its extraordinary jagged coastline and clear blue seas have earned it a deserved reputation for beach tourism, with villas and resorts clinging to the cliffs along the Costa Smeralda. Yet the wealth of prehistoric sites, Punic and Roman remains and Pisan-Romanesque churches make it a fascinating destination for those prepared to forego the luxury of the north-west coast and explore inland.

As with all the larger islands in the Mediterranean, Sardinia was plundered and settled by a succession of pirates and empire builders, though due in large part to its rugged and impenetrable landscape, Sardinian identity was never wholly extinguished. Her Bronze Age settlements truly set it apart. Deep gorges, craggy limestone and slate mountain ranges and swathes of verdant countryside hide over 7000 *nuraghi*, peculiar conical stone structures which were forts, palaces and simple domestic dwellings. Much is left to the imagination as little is known about these edifices, though digs are leading to some fascinating insights.

Evidence of Phoenician power on the island can be seen at Tharros on the west coast, established in the eighth century BC in a strategic position jutting into the sea in the Gulf of Oristano. Later colonized by the Romans, the site is a remarkable example of a coastal city-state. Finds can be seen in Sardinia's superlative collection of archeological museums, in Cagliari, Sassari and Oristano.

The decline of the Roman Empire left Sardinia open to Goths, Lombards, for a short spell the Byzantines, and to the new Muslim empires of North Africa and Spain. The Pisans and Genoese in the eleventh century left an indelible mark on the island with their superb Romanesque churches in the Logudoro region, indeed some of the finest in Europe.

Rule by the Kingdom of Aragon brought a Spanish dimension to the island's culture, most evident today in the Catalan-Gothic architecture of the fishing port at Alghero and, concealed in mediaeval churches in tiny villages the length of the island, sumptuous sixteenth-century retables which rival coeval ones on the Italian mainland.

Itinerary

Day 1: Cagliari. Fly at c. 9.00am from London Heathrow to Cagliari. Walk up the Bastione St. Remy, an immense late nineteenth-century gateway to the Castello region. The cathedral has a remodelled Pisan-Romanesque façade and a pair of sculpted pulpits from 1160. The Museo Diocesano has a 16th-century Flemish triptych. First of three nights in Cagliari.

Day 2: Cagliari. Drive out to the lead mines at Montevecchio, in use from ancient times until the end of the 20th century (now a UNESCO heritage site). The afternoon is spent in the Cittadella dei Musei: the excellent archaeological museum has important finds from the Nuraghic, Phoenician and Roman periods and the art gallery has works by the foremost Sardinian retablist, Pietro Cavaro. The Basilica di San Saturnino is a fine example of early Christian architecture in Sardinia *(subject to confirmation).*

Day 3: Barùmini, Tuìli. The Nuraghe Su' Nuraxi is the largest of the Bronze Age nuraghic complexes, with an impressive central tower constructed of basalt. At nearby Tuìli, the unprepossessing Chiesa di San Pietro houses an exquisite retable by the Maestro di Castelsardo (c. 1500). Return to Cagliari for a free afternoon. Stroll around the mediaeval ramparts or visit the few Baroque churches.

Day 4: Paulilàtino, Oristano. The Basilica di Santa Giusta, erected in 1135, is one of the earliest of the Tuscan Romanesque churches. The Nuraghe Santa Cristina is the most picturesque nuraghic site, surrounded by olive groves and with an astounding underground shrine from the second century BC. At Oristano there is a fine collection at the archaeological museum, a 14th-century polychrome statue by Nicola Pisano in the cathedral and a Catalan crucified Christ in San Francesco. First of two nights in Oristano.

Day 5: Tharros, San Salvatore. Tharros is a magnificently located Punic and Roman site, with fine views over the Gulf of Oristano. The nearby Byzantine Church of San Giovanni in Sinis is the oldest of Sardinia's churches. Visit the Church of the Saviour, which has an underground hypogeum with fourth-century frescoes depicting animals and Roman mythology. Return through the marshes of the lagoon, stopping for lunch at a fish restaurant by the lake where ancient fishing techniques are still in use.

Day 6: Abbasanta, Torralba, Sassari. The Nuraghe Losa and the Nuraghe Santu Antine are examples of Bronze Age palaces, entirely different from those previously seen. The cliff necropolis of Sant'Andrea Priu was used for burial in the second and third centuries BC. In the main chamber are exquisite fragments of later Roman and Byzantine mosaics. San Pietro di Sorres is the most superbly situated Romanesque church in Sardinia, with typical Tuscan black and white stone banding. Continue to Sassari for the first of four nights.

Day 7: Alghero, Porto Torres. Alghero is a picturesque seaside town, still functioning as a commercial fishing port, with streets of Catalan-Gothic architecture. At Porto Torres, the Basilica di San Gavino is a monumental Romanesque structure, Sardinia's earliest and finest, with almost thirty Roman columns flanking the nave. The Copper Age sanctuary of Monte D'Accoddi is entirely unique in the Mediterranean, reminiscent of the tombs of the Aztecs.

Day 8: Sassari. The day is spent in Sassari, which has a network of charming mediaeval streets culminating in stately 19th-century piazzas. The Cathedral of San Nicola has one of Italy's most lavish Baroque facades. There is a vast collection of pre-historic, Punic and Roman artefacts in The Museo Sanna, as well as excellent models of the nuraghi and tomb complexes. The afternoon is free.

Day 9: the churches of the Logudoro. Drive to see a selection of Pisan-Romanesque churches, each in a very different setting in the rural landscape. Santissima Trinità di Saccargia is a splendid example, built in black basalt and white limestone in 1116. Santa Maria del Regno has a magnificent ornate retable from 1515. Sant'Antioco di Bisarcio, built in 1090, has been rebuilt over the centuries and has a French Gothic-style portico.

Day 10. Drive from Sassari to Cagliari to fly to London, arriving c.3.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,220 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (Boeing 737); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches (including 1 picnic) and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £200** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £2,080.**

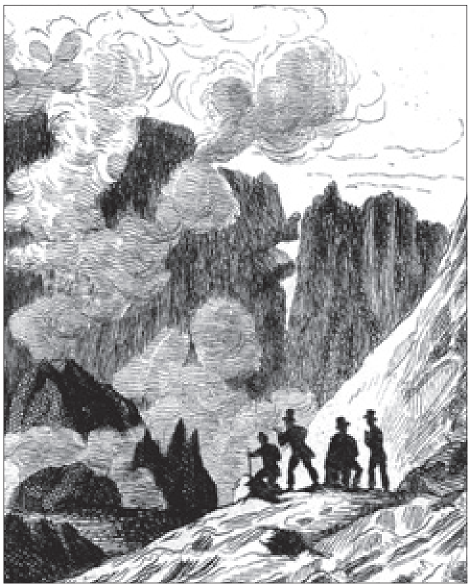
Hotels: Cagliari (3 nights): an elegant 4-star hotel, recently refurbished. Externally unattractive, internally clean and bright. Rooms are spacious and modern. Oristano (2 nights): the only centrally-located 4-star hotel in the town, this is in need of refurbishment, but rooms are spacious and comfortable if a little dated in decor. There is a good restaurant. Sassari (4 nights): a smart and comfortable 3-star hotel in the heart of Sassari. Rooms are simple but well-equipped.

How strenuous? A lot of walking, some over rough ground at archaeological sites or over cobbled or uneven paving. Fitness and sure-footedness are essential. Some long journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 68 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

WALKING IN SICILY

CRATER & COAST: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY



Tourists inspecting Mount Etna, engraving c. 1830.

30 April–7 May 2012 (MY 231)
Lecturer: Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves

15–22 October 2012 (MZ 413)
Lecturer: Christopher Newall

Full details will be available in September 2011. Contact us to register your interest.

A new tour for 2012.

Six walks of between 4 and 9 miles through immensely varied scenery, from mountain forests of beech and birch to salt lake flats along the coast.

Much of archaeological interest, and visits to Syracuse, greatest of west Greek cities, and to the Baroque city of Catania.

Two hotels, in Taormina with direct access to the sea, and in the centre of Syracuse.

Sicily is well chronicled in history and literature as one of the most fascinating destinations in Europe. Her archaeological and historical sites delight the ever-increasing number of visitors to the Mediterranean's largest island, but, fortunately, few of them explore the hugely varied landscapes on foot. Locals rarely indulge in country walking, and shepherds met on mountain paths, tending ricotta-producing sheep and goats amidst rich grasses and wild herbs, are aghast that people choose to walk for a holiday. Yet walking can provide a key to understanding and appreciating this intoxicating island.

Mount Etna, peaking as Europe's highest active volcano at nearly 11,000 feet, and sitting within a designated regional park covering 224 square miles, demands attention but also respect. Volcanologists venture perilously close to the crater's lip in the name of research, but for hikers there are remarkably varied and interesting paths to explore on the north flank.

The distinctive climate and volcanic soils nurture a plethora of wild flowers, with orchids flourishing in both spring and late autumn. On the lower slopes, areas that were once covered with holm oak are now cultivated for citrus fruits and for wine, intensely-flavoured reds and whites that are garnering approval throughout Italy and beyond. Above these, at 6,500 feet, Europe's southernmost beech trees are thriving, as are birch, considered an endemic species. Another thousand feet and the thorny shrub known locally as *spino santo (Astragalus siculus)* covers the ground, and mountain flowers such as senecio, violets and cerastium flourish.

Sicily's second biggest mountain range, the Nebrodi, was denominated the 'island in the island' by Arab invaders. Here there are forests, bubbling streams and quiet lakes, where 150 species of bird make their home alongside protected animals including porcupine and wild cat. The lower reaches are home to the Bronte pistachio, a vital ingredient in Sicilian ice-creams and deserts, just one of many plants the Arabs introduced to Sicily.

In the southeast, where a wonderful quality of light prevails, reflected in the chalky canyons of the Monti Iblei, the plains are chequered by dry-stone walling in a way that recalls the Cotswolds. Here is the ten-square-mile Pantalica Nature Reserve, set on a plateau with gorges plunging through the limestone to the Anapo and Calcinara river valleys. It contains what is thought to be Europe's most extensive open-air necropolis, where the earliest rock tombs can be dated to the thirteenth century BC. The foundations of the *Palazzo del Principe*, the Anaktraton, are also visible, together with the remnants of fortifications.

A coastal walk alongside the salt-water lagoons of the Vendicari Nature Reserve provides another category of experience. The *pantani* are a haven for birds, and with luck flamingos can be spotted at all seasons. Mediaeval watchtowers, an old *tonnaro* (tuna cannery) and a fishery punctuate this landscape, highlighting the importance of sea-faring trade in this part of Sicily. Fifteenth-century merchants in Noto shipped carob, grain and almonds from the port of Vendicari, and until the 1940s tuna was caught and tinned here.

These walks have been designed to make the most of the protected parks in Sicily, thus helping efforts to restore, waymark and maintain the paths in this remarkably unspoilt land on the edge of Europe.

ESSENTIAL JORDAN

THE MAJOR ROMAN, CHRISTIAN & ISLAMIC SITES

4–12 October 2011 (MY 984)
Contact us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

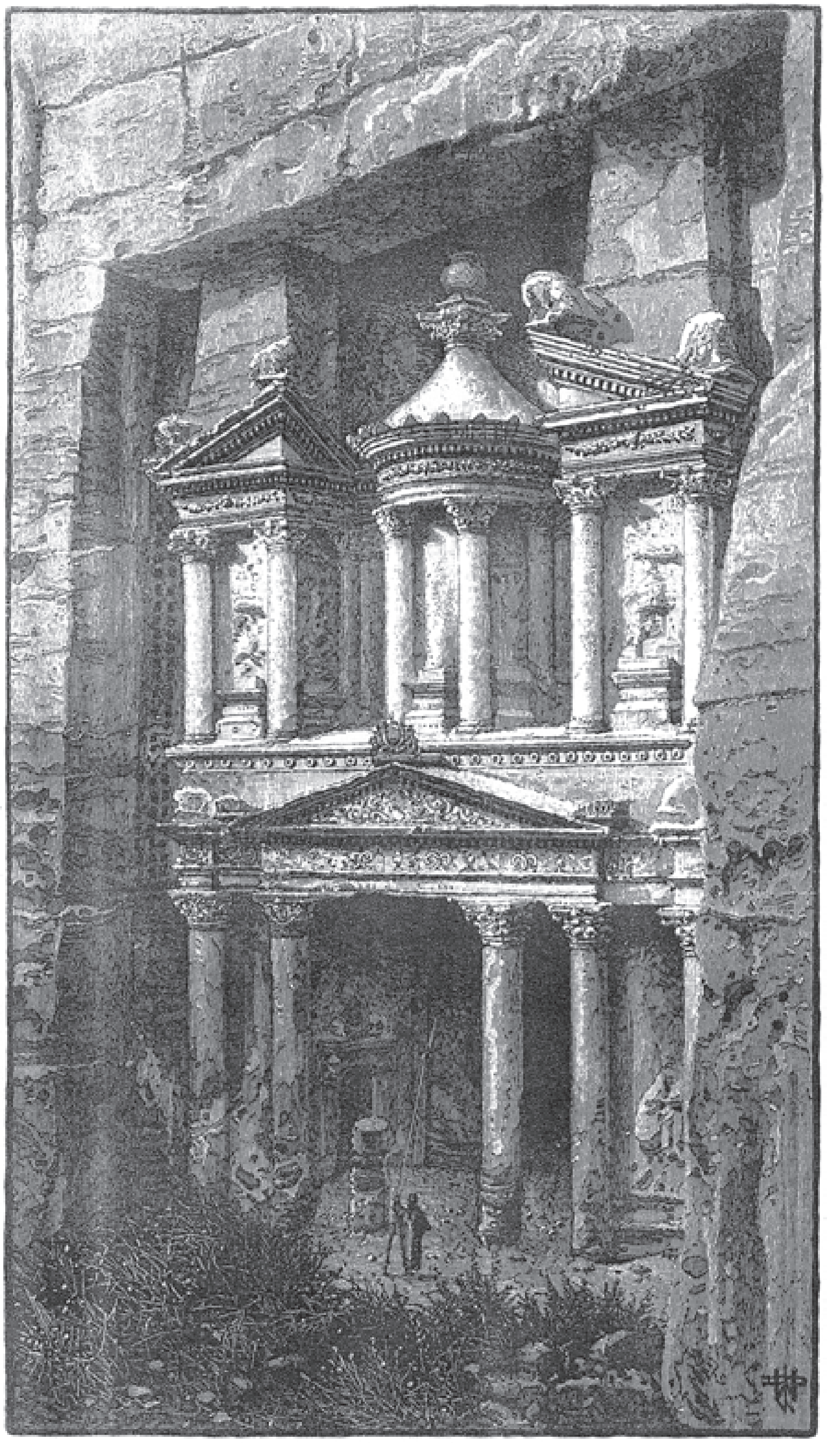
31 March–8 April 2012 (MY 198)
9 days • £3,180
Lecturer: Sue Rollin & Jane Streetly

10–18 April 2012 (MY 205)
9 days • £3,180
Lecturer: Dr Felicity Cobbing

9–17 October 2012 (MZ 393)
9 days • £3,180
Lecturer: Jane Taylor

Outstanding monuments of several civilizations – Nabatean, Roman, Early Christian, Umayyad, Crusader.

Petra is the most spectacular archaeological site in the Middle East; we spend three nights here.



Petra, the Treasury, wood engraving 1883.

Jordan possesses the most spectacular archaeological site in the Middle East – Petra, 'rose-red city, half as old as time', that easternly fascinating, westernly Baroque, altogether extraordinary city of the desert.

Hidden in the mountains at the confluence of several caravan routes, much of its finest architecture is hewn out of the living rock, brilliantly coloured sandstone striated with pinks, ochres and blue-greys. Its builders, the Nabateans, drew on a range of Mediterranean and oriental styles to create a novel synthesis reminiscent of the more ebullient examples of Imperial Roman architecture. Egyptian, Assyrian and Hellenistic influences are also evident.

The Nabateans were an Arabian people who were first recorded in the 4th century BC and grew rich by controlling the trade routes across an empire which stretched from Saudi Arabia to Syria. With Petra their capital, nomadic desert traders became administrators and city-dwellers. They eventually submitted to incorporation in the Roman Empire. Decline, however, soon set in, and it seems that by the 8th century AD Petra had virtually become uninhabited.

Jordan is also rich in remains of many other civilizations. It lay within the wealthy Roman provinces of Syria and Arabia; Jerash is one of the best preserved and most beautiful of Roman cities. The remains of many Byzantine churches and some very fine floor mosaics are scattered through the hills and valleys which were the setting of many events recorded in the Old Testament. The art of Islam is represented by the forts, hunting lodges and desert retreats of the sophisticated and pleasure-loving Umayyad dynasty of the 8th century. The castles of the Crusaders and their Arab opponents are among the most impressive examples of military architecture anywhere.

As a constant backdrop are mountains, gorges and deserts of awesome beauty.

The current Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan started life after the First World War, following the downfall of the Ottoman Empire, its borders an almost arbitrary outcome of the Franco-British re-ordering of the Levant. Something of a backwater then, and constantly buffeted since by the disputatiousness of larger neighbours, Jordan has against the odds succeeded in steering a precarious course to survival, stability and modest prosperity.

Itinerary for 2012

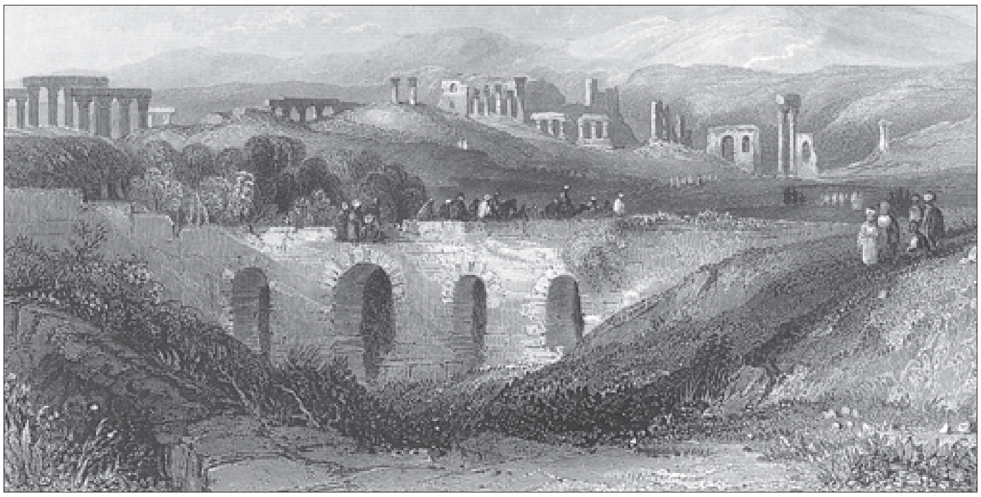
Day 1: Fly at c. 1.30pm from London Heathrow to Amman (time in the air: c. 5 hours). Arrive at the hotel at c. 9.40pm. First of three nights in Amman.

Day 2: Ajlun, Jerash. Drive north through red earth hills with olive groves and Aleppo pine woods. On a hilltop commanding extensive views, Ajlun Castle was built by Arabs in response to the Crusader threat. Jerash, ancient Gerasa, leading city of the Decapolis and very prosperous in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, is one of the best-preserved and most beautiful of ruined Roman cities. Among the more spectacular remains are an oval forum, the Cardo with its flanking colonnades, triumphal arches, food market, hippodrome, theatres, magnificent temples of Zeus and Artemis and several Early Christian churches.

Day 3: Umayyad desert residences. In the desert to the east of Amman are remarkable survivals from the early Islamic Umayyad dynasty, 7th- and 8th-century small pleasure palaces, hunting lodges and forts. Qasr al-Hallabat, converted from a Roman fort; Qasr Amra, the best preserved and most beautiful, with frescoes; the fortress–like desert complex of Qasr Kharana; the fort of Azraq, originally Roman, rebuilt in the 13th century and used by T.E. Lawrence as his HQ.

Day 4: Amman, Karak. The citadel in Amman was the religious and political centre of the ancient city. Here are the remains of the Temple of Heracles, the rebuilt Umayyad palace and the city Archaeological Museum. Leaving Amman, drive southwards along the Biblical King's Highway. The 12th-century Crusader castle of Karak, modified by the Mamluks in the 13th cent., is an impressive example of mediaeval military architecture with many chambers surviving. First of three nights in Petra.

Day 5: Petra. The Siq, the narrow mile-long crevice with its Nabatean carvings and hydraulic system would itself merit a detour, but it is just the prelude to one of the most astonishing archaeological sites in the Middle East. Emerging from the Siq, the visitor is confronted by the temple-like façade of the 'Treasury', vast in scale, classical in vocabulary, Hellenistic in inspiration but uniquely Nabatean, the first of innumerable tombs, altars and associated chambers carved out of the living rock. Not the least striking feature is the multicoloured, striated but predominantly red sandstone. After lunch, return to the hotel or climb, via the Soldier's Tomb complex, up to the High Place of Sacrifice (c. 800 steps) where the sacrificial furnishings are still clearly visible.



Jerash, mid-19th-century engraving.

Day 6: Petra. For the second day in Petra walk again through the Siq and pass through the necropolis gorge, the 'Street of Façades' to study the more open area around the paved and colonnaded street. The remains of various structures include two mighty buildings, the 'Great Temple' and Qasr al Bint. Recent excavations have revealed a church (cathedral?) with mosaic floors and a villa with trompe l'oeil wall paintings. Climb up (over 800 steps) to one of the finest rock-cut façades, Ed-Deir (the Monastery), and some staggering views of hills and valleys of contorted rock.

Day 7: Little Petra, Dead Sea. 'Little Petra', a narrow gorge with three natural widenings, may have developed as a caravanserai after Petra itself had become urbanised. Carved façades and chambers and a fragment of naturalistic Nabatean painting. Spectacular descent through rugged and ragged sandstone to Wadi Araba, part of the Jordanian section of the Great Rift Valley. Here, the lowest place on Earth, Bedouin encampments give way to banana and tomato plantations and then to the Dead Sea. Stop at the Sanctuary of Lot, containing the remains of a 7th-century church and a new museum. Reach the hotel on the shore mid-afternoon, relax and swim. First of two nights in Sweimeh.

Day 8: Mount Nebo, Madaba. Drive up from the Dead Sea, flanked by dramatic mountain scenery. On Mount Nebo, reputed burial site of Moses, a Byzantine church with remarkable mosaics. At Madaba visit the archaeological park, where many mosaics are preserved, and the 6th-century mosaic map of the Levant in the church of St George.

Day 9: Drive to Amman airport (1 hour). Arrive Heathrow c. 12 noon.

There may be slight variations to this itinerary depending on the preferences of the lecturer.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £3,180 (deposit £300)**.** This includes: scheduled air travel (economy class) with Royal Jordanian in 2011 (Airbus A310), and bmi in 2012 (Airbus A321); travel by private coach; breakfasts, 7 lunches (including 2 picnics) and 4 dinners (plus meals on flights) with wine, water, coffee; all admissions to sites; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; all taxes; the cost of the group visa; the services of the lecturer and a Jordanian guide. **Single supplement £420. Price without flights £2,780.**

Hotels: all the hotels are locally rated as 5-star. In Amman (3 nights): a modern hotel with well-equipped and comfortable rooms. In Petra (3 nights): hotel close to the site, modern but in part fitted out in traditional Arab style; comfortable, capacious and well-equipped bedrooms, several restaurants and cafés, swimming pool. In Sweimeh (2 nights): on the Dead Sea, an extensive hotel with buildings scattered through lush tropical gardens; shady lounges, antique or traditional-style furnishings, spa and health centre. Included dinners are good quality buffets.

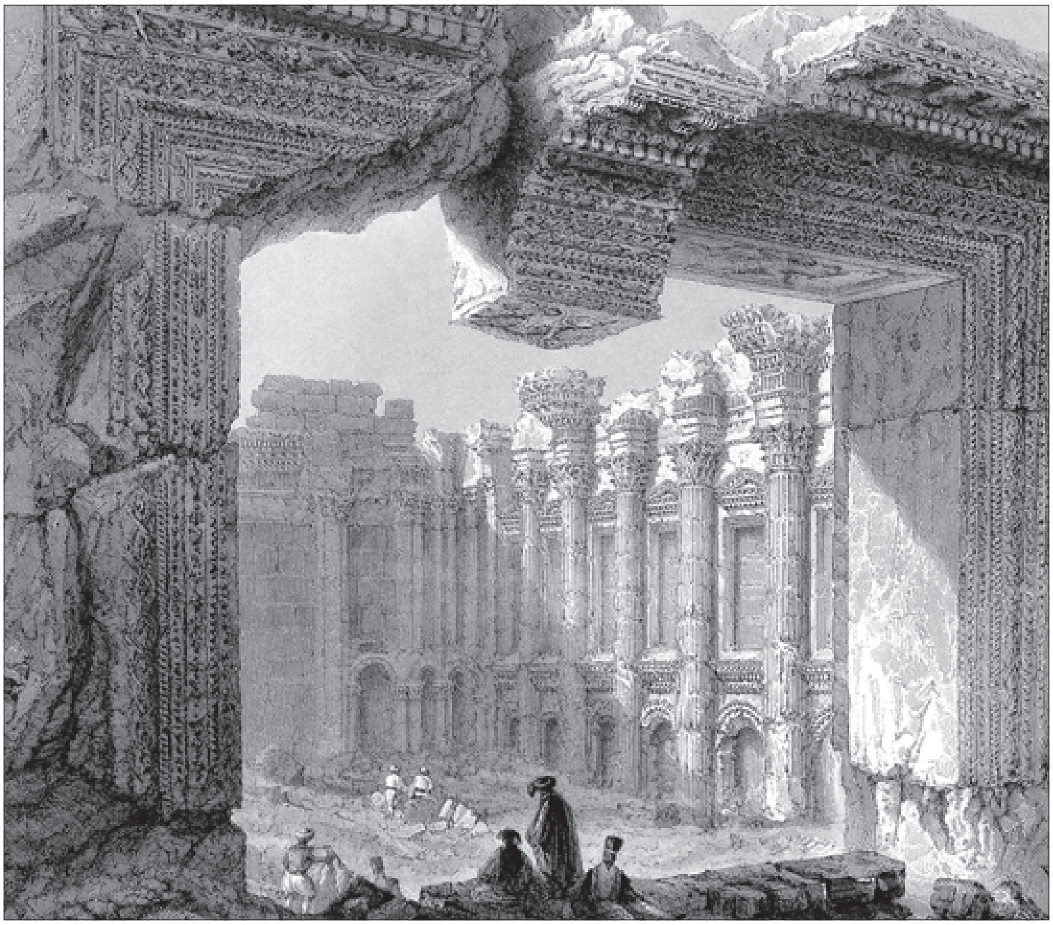
Visas: required for most foreign nationals. Passports do not have to be submitted in advance. A group visa is issued on arrival (the cost is included in the price of the tour as long as you are travelling with the group). Passports must be valid for six months beyond the dates of the tour.

How strenuous? This tour is quite demanding and you must be capable of walking all day over rough sites. Fitness and sure-footedness are essential. Average distance by coach per day: 72 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

LEBANON

THE HEART OF THE LEVANT



Baalbek, engraving c. 1840.

14–22 May 2012 (MY 229)
9 days • £3,140
Lecturer: Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

Extensive Phoenician and Roman remains, Crusader churches and castles, Mamluk and Ottoman town centres.

Based in the charming fishing village of Byblos.

Beirut, resurgent and vibrant, is unlike any other Middle Eastern city.

Thanks to its position at the heart of the Levant, Lebanon possesses both great natural beauty and a rich and varied history. Along its rocky coastline traders, seafarers and conquerors built splendid towns and fortifications and carved their memorials.

Rich historical remains are found in the midst of present-day Lebanese towns and cities. Byblos, one of the oldest towns in the Near East, has yielded remains from the Neolithic to the Crusader periods; Sidon was one of the wealthiest cities of the Phoenicians; at Tripoli, a Crusader castle overlooks the mediaeval Arab town, and the modern capital, Beirut, is built on ruins of great antiquity. From the fertile coastal plain rise the high Lebanon mountains, snow-capped in winter, where clusters of cedars still cling in places to the slopes. Roman temples and Christian churches dot the hills and green valleys, which tradition has long linked with the legend of Adonis. Behind, in the broad Beqaa valley, part of the northern extension of the great African Rift, lies Baalbek, ancient Heliopolis, the 'City of the Sun', its huge classical temples among the most impressive of all time.

Modern Lebanon, having endured years of civil war and international intervention, is remarkable both as a result of rapid regeneration and a now infamous national spirit. Scars of its war-torn past are never far from view and contrast with Lebanon's otherwise glamorous aesthetic, all set amid striking landscape. It is a small country that continues to harbour multiple identities and faiths making it one of the most interesting and diverse locations in the Middle East today.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 4.00pm from London Heathrow to Beirut. Reach the hotel towards midnight for the first of eight nights in Byblos.

GASTRONOMY & WALKING IN LEBANON

October 2012

Full details available in November 2011. Contact us to register your interest.

Day 2: Beirut. Begin the tour with an overview of antiquities gained at the National Museum. Visit Downtown Beirut, reconstructed and pristine, containing Roman and mediaeval remains. Finish the day at the American University of Beirut.

Day 3: Byblos and surrounds. Explore Byblos, one of the oldest cities in the Middle East. The remains include Neolithic and Chalcolithic houses, Phoenician temples, a Roman theatre and the well-preserved Gibelet Crusader castle, residence of the Genoese Embriaco family. The afternoon consists of an optional visit to one of Lebanon's best wineries.

Day 4: Echmoun, Sidon. Drive south of Beirut, keeping to the coast to visit the partially excavated temple of Echmoun from the Persian period. In Sidon visit the 13th-century 'Sea Castle' built by the Crusaders, and the winding mediaeval souqs. Spend the evening in Beirut before returning to Byblos.

Day 5: Beiteddine, Deir al-Qamar. Drive through the Chouf mountains to Beiteddine, the impressive 19th-century palace of Lebanon's first president, Emir Bechir, still used as a summer residence for the current prime minister, and which houses a collection of Romano-Byzantine mosaics. Spend the afternoon visiting the Druze town of Deir al-Qamar with its Ottoman period architecture.

Day 6: Baalbek, Anjar. Spend much of the day at the great cult centre of Baalbek, ancient Heliopolis, the 'City of the Sun'. The height of the monumental temple of Jupiter Heliopolitanus is almost unsurpassed in the Graeco-Roman world. Other temples are dedicated to Bacchus, with beautiful carved decorations, and to Venus. Visit the impressive Umayyad ruins of Anjar.

Day 7: Tripoli. Drive north along the coast to Tripoli, Lebanon's second city. Visit the Crusader Castle of St. Gilles, which overlooks the city, and spend the afternoon in the mediaeval quarter exploring the Mamluk khans, mosques and baths.

Day 8: Cedars of Lebanon, Qozhaya. Drive into the breathtaking Qadisha Valley, a UNESCO world heritage site, to see the Cedars of Lebanon, national symbol. The winding valleys are also home to some of the most ancient monastic communities of the Middle East. The monastery of St Anthony of Qozhaya has a rock-cut museum and grotto.

Day 9: Morning flight from Beirut, arriving into London Heathrow at about midday.

Practicalities

Price: £3,140 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) with bmi (aircraft: Airbus 320); travel by private air-conditioned coach for all the excursions and airport transfers; all breakfasts, six lunches and six dinners with wine, water, coffee; admission to museums and sites; tips for guides, drivers and waiters; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and local guide. **Single supplement £340, price without flights £2,760.**

Hotels. Byblos (8 nights): a charming 5-star hotel picturesquely located on the seafront beside the old harbour.

Visas: required for most foreign nationals and issued free of charge on arrival at Beirut airport.

Passports: must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the end of the tour. Passports must not contain evidence of a visit to Israel.

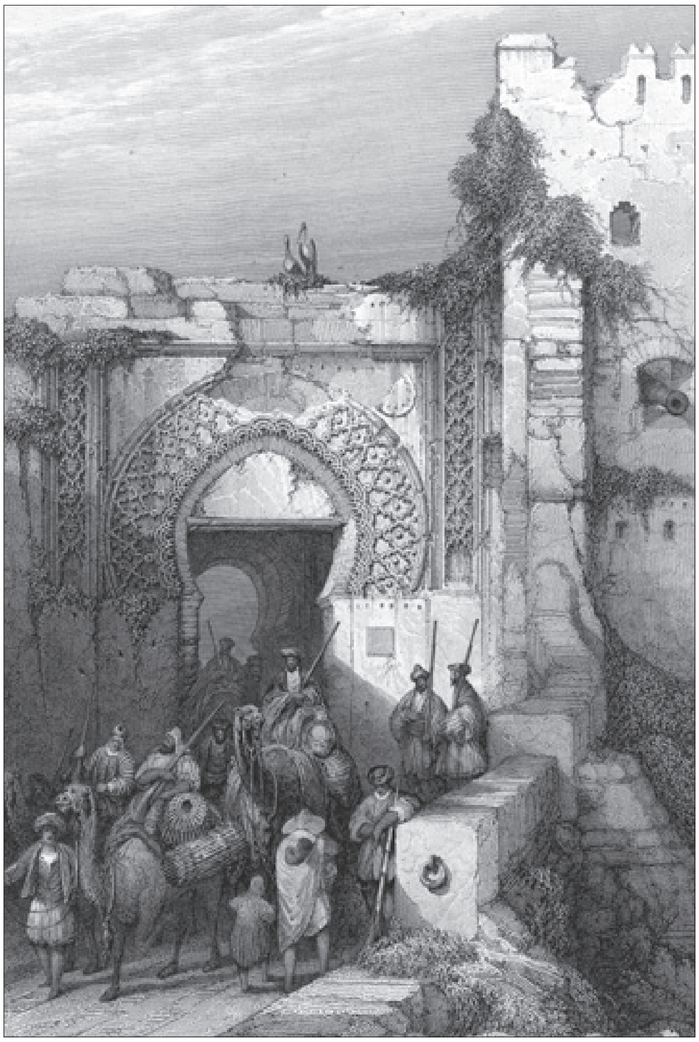
How strenuous? This tour is relatively strenuous with walking over archaeological sites and uneven city pavements. Participants must be sure-footed. Average distance by coach per day: c. 70 miles.

Small group: between 14 and 22 participants.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

MOROCCO

CITIES & EMPIRES



Tangier, steel engraving c. 1840 after David Roberts,

31 March–11 April 2012 (MY 199)
11 nights • £3,880
Lecturer: Dr Amira Bennison

From Tangier to Marrakech, including the imperial cities of Fez and Meknes.

Spectacular landscapes: the Atlas Mountains, valleys, palm groves, woodland, desert.

See the sun set over the sand dunes at Merzouga and visit the magnificent Roman ruins at Volubilis.

Morocco, just a cannon's shot from Gibraltar and the ports of Spain, has always commanded the respect and fascinated the imagination of Europe. It was one of the last nations to fall under colonial occupation in 1912 and the first to win its independence from the French in 1956. The very same Grand Vizier who greeted the first French Governor had the satisfaction of ushering out the last colonial ruler before his death.

Even to fellow Muslims, it was the near legendary 'al-Maghrib al-Aqsa', the land of the setting sun, perched on the north-west corner of the African continent where the known world ended and the sea of darkness began. Its boundaries are defined by four mountain ranges which shelter the fertile Atlantic plains and by three seas: the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the sand sea of the Sahara.

Unlike some parts of the Middle East and North Africa, Morocco was not heavily settled by Arabs after the Islamic conquest in the late 7th to early 8th century. Instead the indigenous Berber tribes of the area converted gradually to Islam and created cities and empires with a uniquely Moroccan flavour. One of the first of these cities was Sigilmassa in the Tafilalt oasis, a tribal watering hole which became a thriving Saharan port city from whence camel caravans set out for West Africa laden with salt from mines in the desert and other northern products which were exchanged in ancient Ghana and Mali for gold, slaves, ostrich feathers, ivory and gum. From Sigilmassa, caravans wended their way north and east to the great entrepots of North Africa, Egypt and the Middle East. Within a couple of decades, Fez was founded in North Morocco as a rival political centre and another stage in the great caravan trade across the Maghrib. In the late 11th century Marrakech emerged in the same way. This rich trade could not help but attract Christian European attention and by the 15th century, the Portuguese had captured Ceuta hoping for a share of the profits. Spain, England, the Netherlands and even the Scandinavian countries were quick to follow, using the Mediterranean ports like Tangier to access the riches of Morocco. Sultanates rose and fell on the profits of this trade which finally dwindled in the 19th century.

The sites along the tour's route tell of the mediaeval Islamic empires of Morocco, founded by Arab conquerors and the Berbers of the region, and of their European trading powers, lured to Africa by tales of gold and other exotic treasures. The long drives, often winding along the ancient trade routes, reveal the dramatic landscapes of Morocco from fertile olive groves to snow-capped mountains and long deep green palm oases which taper into the desert like ribbons trailing from mountain to desert.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 7.30pm from London Heathrow to Tangier (time in the air: c. 2 hours 45 minutes). There will be a snack in your hotel room on arrival. First of two nights in Tangier.

Day 2: Tangier. A morning walk investigates both the traditional walled Muslim city and the relics of the famous turn-of-the-century international city. Visit the Anglican Church, the Kasbah quarter, including the museum, the Petit Socco square and the Mendoubia garden. Some free time.

Day 3: Tetouan, Chefchaouen. The heirs of Granada. Drive east over the Anjera hills to the city of Tetouan, settled by refugees from Andalucía whose Moorish culture is clearly identifiable in the streets of the old city, the products of the artisan school and the archaeological museum. Drive south to Chefchaouen to visit the kasbah and then on to Fez for the first of three nights.

Day 4: Volubilis, Meknes. In impressive isolation on the edge of the olive-covered Zerhoun hills lie the ruins of Volubilis, the capital of Roman Morocco, with triumphal arch, basilica and mosaics. Though it boasts an old walled trading city, a Merenid Madrassa and an intimate palace museum to rival Fez, Meknes is yet overwhelmed by the vast ruins of the 17th-century imperial city established by the powerful Sultan Moulay Ismail to house his Negro slave army.

Day 5: Fez. A full day to explore the extraordinary walled mediaeval city of Fez that stands at the heart of Moroccan culture. Highlights include the Bou Inania Madrassa and the Karaouyine Mosque, as well as the pungent Tanneries. Afternoon tour of the city walls and some free time.

Day 6: the Middle Atlas. Pick up the old caravan trail south, stopping at Midelt before crossing the nomad-grazed high plateau of the Middle Atlas and descending along the Ziz valley to the Tafilalt oasis on the edge of the Sahara. First of two nights in Erfoud.

Day 7: the Tafilalt Oasis, Merzouga. Visit Tafilalt, including the exposed mounds and ruined mud walls that were once the glittering mediaeval city of Sigilmassa. Evening excursion to see the sunset over the sand dunes of the desert of Merzouga.

Day 8: Erfoud to Ouarzazate. Follow a chain of palm-filled valleys west, crossing through the old market town of Tinerhir and the Dades valley. See the extraordinary tapering towers of the kasbahs dotted along the route. Leave the main road for the Todra Gorge with its vividly contrasting colours of bright green vegetation set against red, brown and orange rock faces. Overnight Ouarzazate.

Day 9: the High Atlas. Cross the High Atlas mountains, stopping at Taourirt and the celebrated kasbah village of Aït Benhaddou before twisting through the high passes. Descend through woodland on the north face of the mountains down to the red city of Marrakech for the first of three nights.

Day 10: Marrakech. A morning devoted to the architectural achievements of the Saadian dynasty, paid for by the sale of sugar produced nearby. The dazzling decorative excess of the Saadian tombs and the gaunt simplicity of the ruins of the El Badi Palace are balanced by the calm munificence of the Ben Youssef Madrassa. There is an afternoon visit to the Marjorelle gardens, with its bamboo groves and date plantations.

Day 11: Marrakech. The Koutoubia minaret is the oldest of the three Almohad towers constructed in the 12th century in Marrakech, Rabat and Seville and it stands 70 metres high. The late-19th-century Bahia Palace of the chief minister Ba Ahmad shows the continuity of artistic styles from Saadian era. Free afternoon to visit the world famous markets and Djemaa el-Fna square.

Day 12. Fly from Marrakech to London via Casablanca arriving Heathrow c. 4.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,880 (deposit £350) This includes: air travel (economy class) on flights with Royal Air Maroc and Atlas Blue ('no frills' sister company) (Boeing 737); private air-conditioned coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 7 lunches and 8 dinners with wine or soft drinks (not all restaurants serve alcohol), water, coffee or tea; all admissions; all tips; the services of the lecturer and local guides. **Single supplement £550. Price without flights £3,620.**

Hotels: Tangier (2 nights): comfortable but dated 5-star hotel, centrally located; Fez (3 nights): excellent 5-star hotel within the medina; Erfoud (2 nights): friendly but comparatively basic hotel; Ouarzazate (1 night): functional 4-star hotel; Marrakech (3 nights): characterful and tranquil riad-style hotel, within the kasbah quarter of the medina; rooms vary in size and outlook. All hotels have swimming pools.

Visas: not required by British citizens. Nationals of other countries should check their requirements.

How strenuous? A long and tiring tour with a lot of walking on rough ground, through narrow streets and busy markets, frequent hotel changes and some lengthy coach journeys. Average distance by coach per day: 80 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

Rabat
Fez
Marrakech

November 2012

Details available in January 2012.
Contact us to register your interest.

NORWAY: ART, ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPE

OSLO, BERGEN & THE WESTERN FJORDS

11–19 June 2012 (MY 288)
9 days • £3,520
Lecturer: Dr Harry Charrington

New for 2012.

A tour which ties together the drama of the landscape with the architecture, art and design.

A great tradition of Norwegian modernism with buildings by Sverre Fehn, Arne Korsmo, Snøhetta and Lund & Slaatto.

Wide range of museums and galleries from the Viking Ship Museum in Oslo to the glacier museum in Mundal; Fine Arts in Bergen and the Hedmark in Hamar.

Journeys of immense beauty by rail and boat are a major part of the tour.

Special arrangements include visits to private villas, a ferry chartered for our group and a talk by the curator of the National Museum of Architecture.

For most of the twentieth century, the legend of Scandinavian art, design and architecture grew and grew; an austerely simple yet humane design effortlessly in harmony with nature. Yet somehow Norway was never part of this. Facing the North Atlantic it seemed distant, more attuned to the brilliant melancholy of Grieg, Ibsen and Munch. But that is only a part of the story, and this tour combines landscape, art and design to give a fuller sense of Norway's extraordinary beauty and creativity.

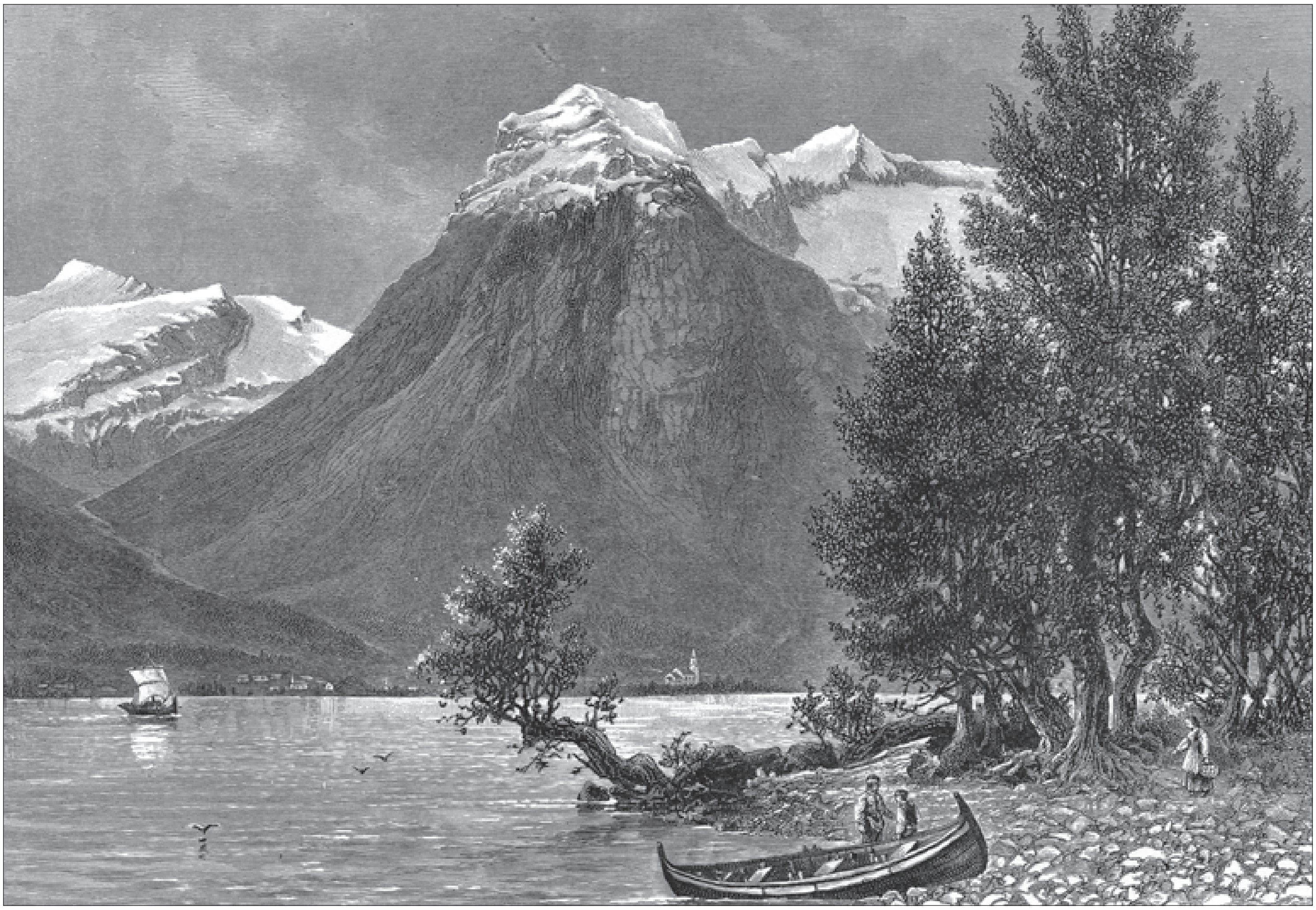
In the folds of the fjords there have always been some of the most remarkable wooden buildings and towns – and boats – in Europe, while already in the 1930s Arne Korsmo's beautiful villas above Oslofjord showed a particular Norwegian modernism. In the last two generations, bolstered by the extraordinary well-invested wealth of their oil reserves, the Norwegians have set about designing a society to match the beauty of their setting, and place them at the forefront of contemporary design.

We begin in Oslo, which in the last few years has become one of Europe's most civilized and elegant cities, now crowned by Snøhetta's astonishing Opera House. Its sheltered location and wide bourgeois streets could not contrast more than with the drama of Bergen and its dense wooden Hansa Bryggen where we end. However, both cities host great collections of paintings that show the fine eye and great skill with which Norwegians have observed their milieu.

As with everywhere else in Norway, water dominates. In fact the story of Norwegian design really begins with our visit to the Viking longboats and continues at the Urnes stave church which overlooks the bucolic Sognefjord two hundred miles inland. We travel there from Oslo on one of the most beautiful train journeys imaginable, and then sail across the fjord to the beguiling timber Hotel Mundal. We leave for Bergen again by boat, following the fjord to the Atlantic.

It is in the tiny town of Mundal, lying in the shadow of Norway's largest glacier, that Sverre Fehn built his 'Bremuseum' (glacier museum). Fehn, who died in 2009, produced

A Norwegian fjord, wood engraving c. 1890.



an architecture of intelligence and poetry that has made him the subject of veneration unmatched since Alvar Aalto. His Hedmark museum in Hamar, one of the most significant interpretations of an historic site in Europe, is simply extraordinary.

Itinerary

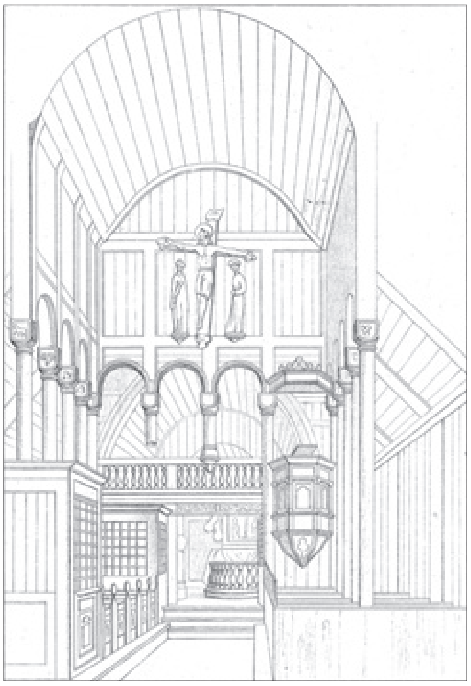
Day 1: London to Oslo. Fly at c. 10.15am from London Heathrow to Oslo. Settle into the hotel before an introductory walk through the city (Royal Palace, University, Parliament) to the new waterfront developments by Niels Torp and others. The latest addition here is Renzo Piano's contemporary art gallery (due to open 2012). First of four nights in Oslo.

Day 2: Oslo. Begin with the National Gallery, a small but fine collection of Norwegian art including a room dedicated to Edvard Munch. Walk to two buildings by Sverre Fehn: Glydendal Publishing house (2007) and the National Museum of Architecture (2008). Talk here by the senior curator. Continue by coach to Snøhetta's glacial waterfront opera house (2008). End on Bygdøy – museum island – at the magnificent Viking Ship Museum.

Day 3: Hamar, Oslo. Drive north to the ancient city of Hamar, beautifully sited on the shores of Lake Mjøsa. Here is Fehn's greatest work, the Hedmark Museum and Bishop's Palace (1967–79). See also the adjacent ruins of Hamar Cathedral, now housed in a 'crystal palace' by Lund & Slaatto (1998). Back in Oslo, visit the chthonic church of St Hallvard with its inverted dome and rugged brickwork – an earlier work by Lund & Slaatto.

Day 4: Oslo. Residential Oslo is represented today with visits (by special arrangement) to two exquisite modernist villas by Arne Korsmo: the Villa Stenersen (1938; renovation work may be underway here) and the Villa Dammann (Korsmo with Sverre Aasland, 1932). High above the city the Holmenkollen ski jump is a new landmark (JDS, 2010) with magnificent views. Return to the centre for free time. Suggestions include taking the ferry to Bygdøy, home to Kon-Tiki, or visiting the Åkerhus (fortress) and Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art.

Day 5: Oslo to Mundal. Spend the day travelling into the Western Fjords – a journey of considerable drama and beauty. 8.10am train from Oslo, disembarking at Myrdal, a remote junction high above the Raundal Valley (journey time: c. 4 hours 45 minutes). Here join the famed Flåm railway, a spectacular fifty-minute descent to the shores of the Aurlandsfjord. The final leg is by boat (private charter) from Flåm to Mundal at the very end of Fjaerlandfjord. Walk to our hotel, a handsome villa built 1891 by Peter Blixen. Two nights in Mundal.


Urnes stave church, steel engraving c. 1840.

Day 6: Mundal, Urnes. Mundal is a pretty village tucked between glacier, mountain and water. Here, sitting as if a terminal moraine, is Fehn's glacier museum (1991), a complex building responding to the dramatic landscape. Drive to the village of Solvern, from where we embark to Urnes. Walk up to the stave church, among the oldest and most celebrated in Norway, with carvings dating to the 12th century. Its beautiful orchard setting is on a promontory above Lustrafjord (a branch of the Sognefjord) with views north and south. Return to Mundal.

Day 7: Mundal to Bergen. The morning is free to visit Mundal's church and Hay-on-Wye-style bookstalls, or to walk or cycle round the fjord. Lunch in the hotel before boarding the ferry to Balestrand (1 hour 30 minutes) connecting then to the boat along Sognefjord to the Atlantic and Bergen, a route taken by many a British tourist in the 19th century (c. 3 hours 45 minutes). Arrive at the hotel c. 9.00pm.

Day 8: Bergen. A lively port of immense charm flanked by wooded hills. Walk along the boardwalks of the Bryggen, the colourful mediaeval merchants' quarter and home to the Hanseatic Museum. Ride the funicular train up Mount Fløyen for spectacular views. Continue to the heart of the modern city, including the museum quarter laid out from the 1920s around a lake. The Fine Arts Museum is superb for modern and Norwegian art.

Day 9: Bergen. Free morning. Suggestions include the fish market, the Bryggen Museum or the Decorative Arts Museum. Midday departure for Troldhaugen, the idyllic summer home of Edvard Grieg. See his villa and waterside studio, and also his tomb. Lunchtime recital in the concert hall here (to be confirmed). Continue to Bergen airport and fly to Heathrow arriving c. 8.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,520 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) London–Oslo with SAS (aircraft: Boeing 737) and Bergen–London with bmi (aircraft: Airbus 319) rail and boat travel as indicated in the itinerary (including private charter Flåm–Mundal); private coach travel; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 6 dinners with a glass or two of wine, water and coffee; all admissions and donations; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £480** (double room for single use). **Price without flights £3,340.**

Hotels: in Oslo (4 nights): a family-run 5-star in the heart of the city; comfortable, stylish and understated; good restaurant. In Mundal (2 nights): a small, historic hotel (34 rooms) on the waterfront; charming, eccentric and reminiscent of a private home; rooms are without mod cons (though all are ensuite). In Bergen (2 nights): a functional 4-star a short walk from the Fine Arts Museum; good public areas and well-equipped if dated bedrooms.

How strenuous? This is a lengthy tour with a lot of travelling – by coach, boat and train. You need to be fit and able to carry or wheel your own luggage. Walking is often on uneven ground and uphill. Average distance by coach per day: 32 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

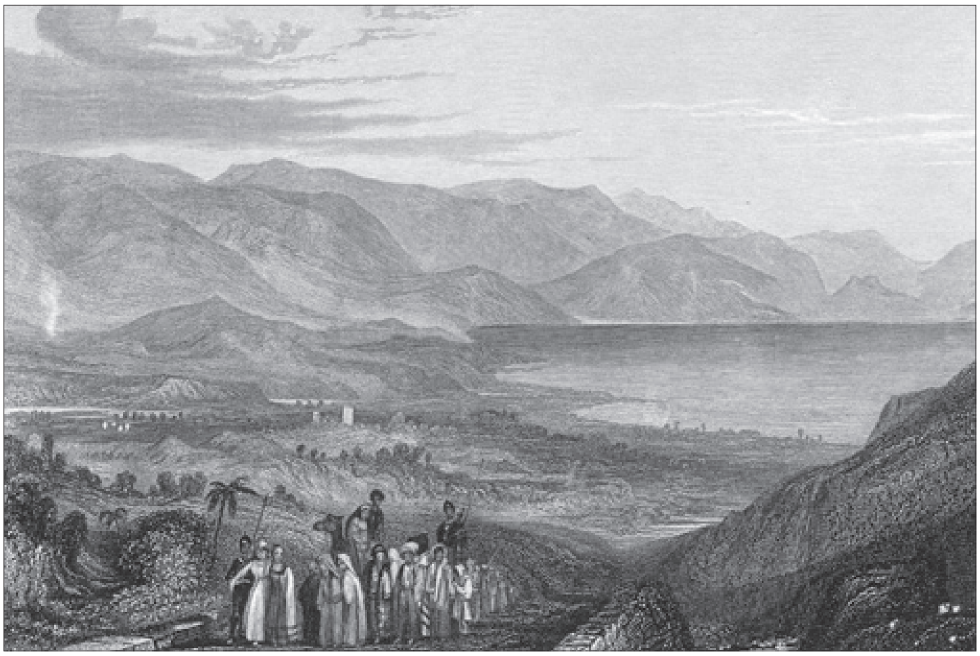
BERGEN FESTIVAL

May 2012

Details available in January 2012.
Contact us to register your interest.

PALESTINE

ARCHAEOLOGY & ARCHITECTURE OF THE WEST BANK



The Dead Sea, engraving c. 1850.

5–12 March 2012 (MY 172)
£2,570 • 8 days
Lecturer: Dr Felicity Cobbing

A new tour for 2012.

A pioneering tour which includes the major archaeological sites and the most significant historic buildings on the West Bank.

There are two forays into Jerusalem.

Provides an insight into a territory – shortly, maybe, to become a nation – much in the news but little visited in recent years.

Palestine is a land of limestone hills with the humped contours of a children's picture-book. The surface is generally a grey-green impasto of olives and scrub, sometimes beautified with the striations of ancient terraces, farmed intermittently in clefts and nooks, grazed where vegetation is harsh and coarse. Then there are the hills of the Judaean desert, crinkled, barren rock, khaki with a dusting of white.

Straggling along crests and down hillsides, Palestinian towns and villages are given visual unity by white limestone cladding – a requirement introduced during the British mandate and still adhered to. They express individualism, enterprise and struggle. By contrast, the Israeli settlements crowning many a peak are fortress-like high-density clusters.

Recent history and current affairs cannot be ignored in this part of the world but the focus of the tour is archaeology, architecture and more distant history. Scattered across the West Bank are some very remarkable sites and buildings. The creations of Herod the Great, among the most impressive structures of the ancient world, feature prominently, and there are significant remains from the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, Crusader and Ottoman eras. A particular feature are the desert monasteries; Christian sites feature much more than Islamic.

Tourism is hardly new to Palestine: pilgrimage tours follow well-worn routes, quickly bouncing back after intermittent periods of strife, but other sorts of specialist tours are relatively rare. There has been investment in hotels and infrastructure in recent years, and the people are generally very welcoming.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 8.30am from London Heathrow to Tel Aviv (Israel) and drive through the Separation Wall to Bethlehem (Palestine). Reach the hotel in time for a lecture and dinner. Four nights are spent here.

Day 2: Herodion, Solomon's Pools, Mar Saba. The Herodion is an extraordinary fortified palace built by King Herod 24–15 BC on an artificial hill. There are extensive remains of defences, cisterns and baths and superb views. It was supplied with water from 'Solomon's Pools', a series of reservoirs 9 km away, visited next. Return to Bethlehem for lunch and drive into the Judaean desert to visit the Orthodox monastery of Mar Saba, perched in a gorge and with a beautiful chapel *(limited access for women!).* Overnight Bethlehem.

Day 3: Hebron (Al-Khalil), Judaean Desert. The Herodian phase of the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron is one of the most impressive buildings of the ancient world. The interior is Crusader and Mamluk, and is now divided between Muslims and Jews. We also see a 19th-century Russian church here. *Hebron is volatile and this visit may be cancelled at short notice.* The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, not significantly changed since AD 339, is one of the greatest of Early Christian buildings; five aisles and monumental Corinthian colonnades. Overnight Bethlehem.

Day 4: Jerusalem. Spend the day in the Old City of Jerusalem (ruled *de facto* by Israel but claimed by Palestine). This is the most extraordinary city on Earth, a vibrant Middle-Eastern enclave split between rival communities and composed of mediaeval and ancient masonry. The main places visited are the Haram ash-Sharif, alias the Temple Mount, Herod's great retaining wall supporting a platform now adorned with some of the earliest and finest Islamic buildings, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Constantinian and Crusader. Overnight Bethlehem.

Day 5: Bethlehem to Jericho. The journey down to the Dead Sea is broken at a modern museum of ancient mosaics. The palm-shaded oasis of Jericho is a place of superlatives, the world's most low-lying town and arguably its oldest continuously inhabited one. The lowest strata of Tell as-Sultan are 10,000 years old and there is a unique tower of c. 7000 BC. Hisham's Palace is a remarkably well preserved 8th-century Umayyad palace. The Monastery of Temptation is inserted in the high cliff overlooking the site and can now be reached by cable car. First of two nights in Jericho.

Day 6: desert monasteries. The theme of the day is monasticism in the Judaean hills, beginning with the community of Jewish zealots at Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, and continuing to functioning Christian monasteries in the wadis. According to tradition, Nabi Musa is the burial place of Moses and has Mamluk, Byzantine and Ottoman parts. There is an optional walk to the 19th-century Greek Orthodox monastery of St George in Wadi Kelt with free time in Jericho as an alternative. Overnight Jericho.

Day 7: Sebastia, Nablus, Ramallah. Amid lovely countryside north-west of Nablus, Sebastia (Samaria) is a fascinating archaeological site with extensive remains spreading over a hill, principally Roman and Hellenistic but reaching back much earlier. In Nablus, Jacob's Well is enshrined in a church which was begun by the Crusaders and completed last century. A visit to another archaeological site is subject to confirmation. Overnight in Ramallah, the political and business centre of Palestine.

Day 8: Jerusalem. The Rockefeller Museum, formerly the Palestinian Archaeological Museum, has finds from some of the sites visited on this tour, including Hisham's Palace. After lunch at the American Colony Hotel in East Jerusalem, drive to Tel Aviv airport. The flight arrives at Heathrow c. 8.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,570 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 767); private coach for all other journeys; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, seven lunches and five dinners with wine, water and coffee; admissions to museums and sites; tips for restaurant staff, guides, drivers; airport taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guides. **Single supplement £380**. **Price without flights £2,190**.

Hotels. The first two are international chain hotels used largely by religious package tours but they are comfortable and well equipped, rated locally respectively as 4-star and 5-star. In Bethlehem (4 nights): a flamboyant late 19th-century mansion with bedrooms in a modern building around a garden to the rear; in Jericho (2 nights): a high-rise building outside the centre. In Ramallah (1 night): a new and very smart 5-star business hotel.

Visas: are obtained on arrival at no charge for most nationalities.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, some of it over rough ground and uneven paving, and sure-footedness is essential. Average distance by coach per day: c. 41 miles.

Small group: between 14 and 22 participants.

ISRAEL & PALESTINE

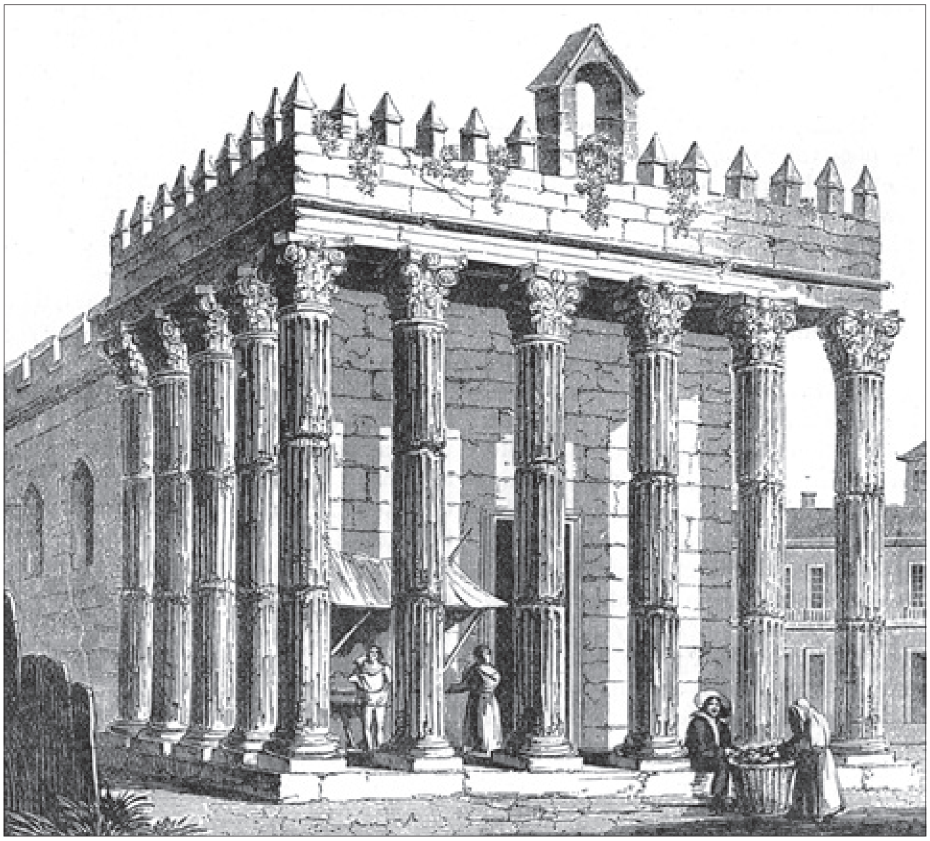
7–16 February 2012 (MY 161)
Lecturer: Dr Garth Gilmour

16–25 October 2012 (MZ 411)
Lecturer: Dr Garth Gilmour

See page 78.

THE HEART OF PORTUGAL

HISTORY, ARCHITECTURE, LANDSCAPES



Évora, Temple of Diana, late 19th-century engraving.

5–13 October 2011 (MY 981)
This tour is nearly full.

26 September–4 October 2012 (MZ 384)
9 days • £2,230
Lecturer: Adam Hopkins

Central Portugal, cradle of a tiny nation which struggled mightily for independence.

Rich in Romanesque and Gothic architecture.

Some beautiful scenery, hilltop castles and charming towns with numerous examples of decorative tiles.

Portugal's status as an agreeable member of the European minor league, now struggling financially, runs contrary to her huge place in world history and impressive mediaeval antecedents. The nascent country's advance against the Moors in the Iberian far west and then its courageous self-defence against the might of a neighbouring Castile revealed a nation that would be perpetually in arms and perpetually in thrall to the Christian cause, however interpreted. Sea discovery and empire, with its ensuing riches, gold and slave trade, followed logically. The groundwork for all of this is visible to the eye in central Portugal.

Here, our concern is with the land stretching onwards from the Douro to the Tagus, hilly and tightly bunched by the western seaboard then stretching out into the broad and exhilarating sweeps of the Alentejo in the east; wheat and cork oak country of deep rusticity.

The first king of an independent Portugal pushed down through this land and endowed it in glorious style. It was King Afonso Henriques himself, in celebration of the capture from the Moors of Santarém, a key town on the Tagus, in 1147, who brought in the Cistercians to build the sensational 'pure' Gothic abbey of Alcobaça.

On August 14, 1385, with the aid of English archers, João I, first king of the new House of Avis, defeated the Castilians so heavily in central Portugal that this particular threat was over for a while. Close to the battlefield, João established another thrilling monastery, Batalha, or Battle – a cry of triumph.

Here João is buried with Philippa of Lancaster, his wife. She bore him five sons, all also buried here. This extraordinary brood were to carry Portugal to the threshold of the modern. One of them was Prince Henry the Navigator whose ambitions set in motion the exploration of the African coast and led in turn, less than a century later, to Vasco da Gama's arrival in India. Imperial wealth flowed into Portugal at the start of the sixteenth century. Under the royal beneficiary, Manuel the Fortunate, there developed the hyper-decorative style now known as 'Manueline' Gothic architecture. Batalha abbey is fourteenth/fifteenth-century 'pure' Gothic, massively decorated with sixteenth-century Manueline pinnacles and every imaginable foible stone could be worked into. All so far, symbolically speaking, is concentrated here.

There came, of course, in 1580, the evil hour in which Castile finally did accomplish a takeover of Portugal. Two generations later it was yet another new dynasty, the House of Braganza, which won back independence. The Braganza family palace is in the Alentejo and we visit it on this trip. We go to Coimbra, too, where a later Braganza, recipient of gold and diamonds from Brazil, constructed the gilded library of the ancient University in the early eighteenth century, a second age of imperial splendour.

Other delights include the Templar headquarters at Tomar (Romanesque with later additions of extraordinary maritime-inspired effusion), the extremely decorative World Heritage city of Évora, charming villages and hilltop castles in the remotest of remote country – looking out over that traditional enemy, Castile. The heart of Portugal: today a republic, a democracy, a member of the EU, a deeply historic country struggling to be modern.

Itinerary

Day 1: Buçaco. Fly at c. 1.00pm from London Gatwick to Porto. Drive south into the Buçaco forest. Our hotel was built as a wild neo-Manueline Gothic fantasy at the turn of the 20th century; a retreat for the Portuguese royal family. First of two nights in Buçaco.

Day 2: Coimbra. Capital of Portugal 1139 to 1385, Coimbra's reputation outweighs its beauty though monuments are rich. The church of Santa Clara a Nova is the burial place of Sta Isabel, 14th-century Queen of Portugal. Cross the River Mondego to the Old Town for the densely historic church of Santa Cruz with fine *azulejos* (decorative tiles), the Old University with 18th-century gilded library and the impressive Romanesque cathedral.

Day 3: Alcobaça, Batalha, Tomar. Drive south to two extraordinary monasteries of the greatest beauty and historical significance. Alcobaça, founded 1153, is a building of breathtaking Gothic purity. Nearby Batalha, built by order of King João I, mixes French Gothic and Manueline in an intoxicating display. The drive east becomes increasingly rural. First of two nights in the small town of Tomar.

Day 4: Tomar. Crowning a hill above the town the military-religious complex of the Convento de Cristo is one of Portugal's most important and beautiful sites. The octagonal Templar church survives, Romanesque, with fine Manueline extension. The west window here, utterly exuberant, is regarded as the chief Manueline masterwork. Free time in the grid-built mediaeval town.

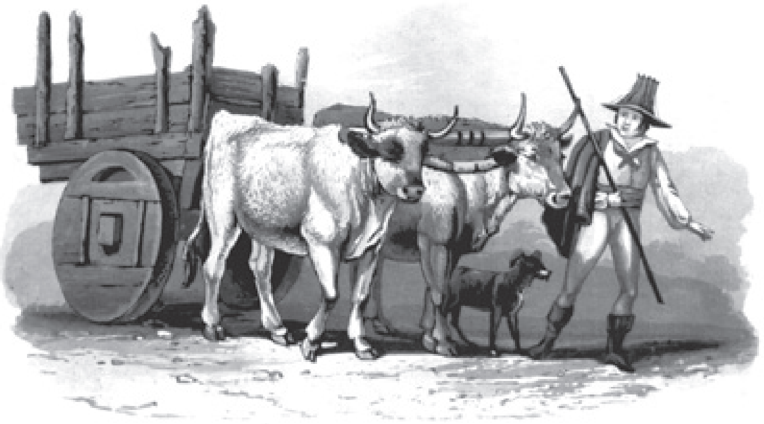
Day 5: Castelo de Vide, Marvão, Évora. Drive eastwards into the wonderfully rural Alentejo which borders Spain: mountainous in the north, wide and sweeping in the south. Visit two delightful hill villages dominated by mediaeval castles: Castelo de Vide and Marvão. Continue to Évora, regional capital of the greatest charm, for the first of four nights.

Day 6: Évora, Arraiolos. A morning walk in Évora includes Portugal's best preserved Roman temple, 2nd or 3rd century AD; the cathedral, battlemented, mainly Gothic on a Romanesque plan; 16th-century Jesuit university and the 'royal' church of São Francisco. Optional afternoon in Arraiolos, a charming village with castle and lavender-coloured trim on many houses. Here carpets have been stitched since the 17th century.

Day 7: Vila Viçosa, Olivença. The Braganza family's main palace is in the marble-quarrying town of Vila Viçosa. It preserves the memory of King Dom Carlos who left home one February morning in 1908 only to be assassinated in Lisbon that afternoon. Cross the Spanish border to lunch in Olivença (Olivenza), a delightful Portuguese town with Manueline monuments which fell into Spanish hands after the War of the Oranges in 1801.

Day 8: Évora, Elvas. In Évora begin at the church of São João Evangelista, once serving the monastery where we are staying, with some of the finest *azulejos* in Portugal. The recently reopened city museum houses the 13 famous Flemish paintings of the Life of the Virgin. Afternoon in Elvas, border town of great individuality within a huge and critically important fortress. Visit the cathedral, castle and English cemetery dating from the Peninsular War, beautiful and moving.

Day 9. Drive to Lisbon Airport for the flight arriving London Heathrow c. 3.30pm (2011) or 5.30pm (2012). *Please note that this tour departs from Gatwick but returns to Heathrow.*



Portuguese muleteer, engraving c. 1820.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £2,230 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled TAP flights (Air Portugal) (Airbus 319); private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; wine tasting; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Suite supplement £270** (room rate for 2 people sharing, in Évora only). **Single supplement** (double for sole use) **£340. Price without flights £2,070.** Please contact us for the price in 2011.

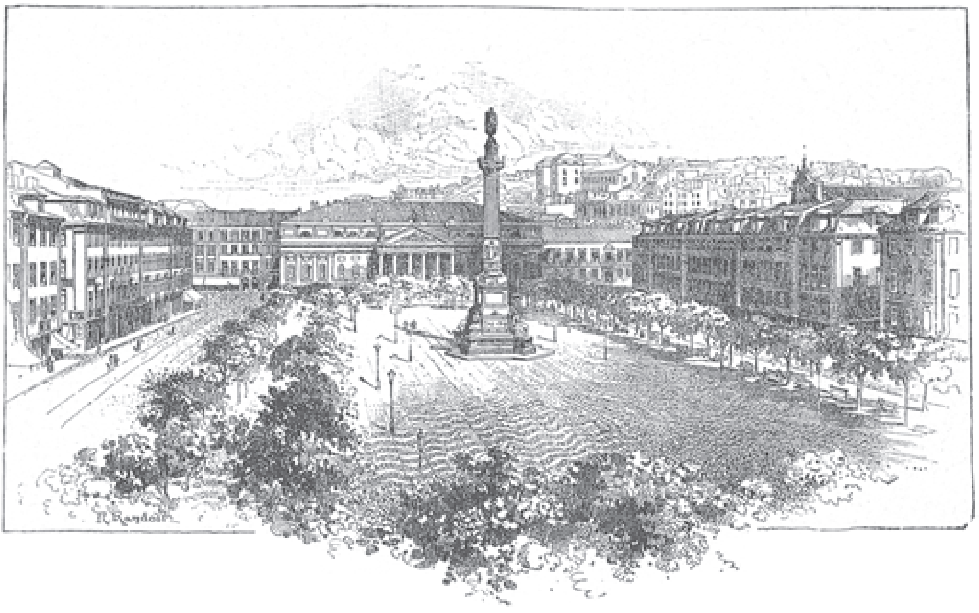
Hotels: in Buçaco (2 nights): grandiose hotel in former royal hunting lodge with gardens; rooms vary; rated as 5-star though more like a 4-star. In Tomar (2 nights): 4-star hotel a few minutes walk from the mediaeval town; rooms are unremarkable but are well-equipped; indoor and outdoor pools. In Évora (4 nights): small 4-star hotel (pousada) installed in the Monastery dos Lois and retaining much of the original building; excellent location, attractively furnished but rooms are small. Meals are in hotels and selected restaurants.

How strenuous? There are steep streets, cobbles and steps, and coach access is difficult; good mobility and sure-footedness are essential. There is daily coach travel; average distance per day 87 miles:

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

LISBON NEIGHBOURHOODS

ART, ARCHITECTURE & GARDENS IN & AROUND THE CAPITAL



Lisbon, Rossio Square, wood engraving 1890.

17–21 April 2012 (MY 215)
5 days • £1,560
Lecturer: Adam Hopkins

Superb and varied collections of decorative and fine arts as well as some of the best examples of Portuguese ceramic tiles.

Palaces and gardens are well represented including the National Palace at Sintra and the Rococo Royal Palace at Queluz.

Rejuvenation in the last decade has transformed Lisbon into a vibrant and attractive city.

Each of Lisbon's neighbourhoods has its own atmosphere and its own treasures – and the same is emphatically true of the nearby hill – or mountain – of Sintra, with palaces and gardens, and a tendency for mist to hang romantically about its peak. Despite the nation's money troubles and the city's pockets of poverty, Lisbon itself remains one of the most romantic capitals of Europe. The Alfama neighbourhood rises high to east of centre, its castle synonymous with the fortunes of early Lisbon and with fine views of the bellying Tagus below. The centre itself – the 'Baixa', at river level, was built on a grid plan by the dictator Pombal in the eighteenth century, one of the great successes of early town planning. Above to the west rises the ever more lively – and stylish – Bairro Alto or High District and far beyond, where the Tagus reaches out towards the Atlantic, comes Belém. King Manuel the Fortunate, his coffers swelling with the riches of India, envisaged a new Bethlehem for a new Christianity mission to the East. The result: two of Portugal's great buildings: the Belém tower, feet washed by the river, and the gorgeous Jerónimos Monastery. Add to these, museums and galleries with fine and applied arts of the highest level, swelling hills and the constant presence of the river, glimpsed when least expected, not to mention the world's finest grilled sardines.

Itinerary

Day 1: Lisbon. Fly at c. 11.15am from London Heathrow to Lisbon. Drive to the hotel and settle in. The Medeiros and Almeida Foundation is an excellent and varied collection of decorative and fine arts, assembled by the Medeiros family in the 19th century and housed in the family home. Highlights include the French and Chinese collections, and an impressive British thunder box.

Day 2: Belém, Alfama. Drive out to the Jéronimos Monastery at Belém, an outstanding example of the exuberant Maueline style with fine carving and vaulting. On the banks of the Tagus are the monument to the 'Explorers' and the Torre de Belém (fortress) – also Manueline with Moorish decoration. Continue to Alfama, a labyrinth of alleys rising up from the river. The Cathedral, once a fortress but much remodelled, retains much if its Romanesque appearance. Walk around the ramparts and gardens of the Castle, founded by King Alfonso Henriques to celebrate his victory over the Moors in 1147. End the day at the Museu Nacional do Azulejo (ceramic tiles), a superb collection of one of Portugal's great art forms with pieces from the 15th century to the present day.

Day 3: Queluz, Sintra. Drive to the royal palace and gardens at Queluz, built for the Infante Dom Pedro, a version of Versailles tempered by a Rococo elegance and a more intimate scale. Continue to the beautifully situated town of Sintra, the favoured summer residence of the kings of Portugal for six centuries, and much praised in poetry and prose. Visit the Palácio Nacional with its curious oast-house-like conical towers and remarkable 16th- and 17th-century azulejos. Lunch in the 18th-century Palácio de Seteais, now a hotel. Visit the gardens of Quinta da Monserrate, laid out in 1856 for Sir Francis Cook, first Visconde de Monserrate.

Day 4: Benfica, Lapa, Bairro Alto. In Benfica, visit by arrangement the Palácio dos Marqueses de Fronteira. The tile work is excellent, particularly the Battle Room depicting the War of Independence. Drive to Lapa to the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga with 15th- and 16th-century Portuguese works of art – displayed in a beautiful palace. Back in the centre of Lisbon, walk around the Bairro Alto, a now fashionable hub of theatres, boutiques, cafés and restaurants. Visit the highly ornate church of São Roque and the ruined Convento do Carmo and its archaeological museum.

Day 5: Lisbon. The morning is spent at the Gulbenkian Museum, an outstanding private art collection given to the city of Lisbon and beautifully housed in a modern building. Continue to the airport for the flight to Heathrow, arriving c. 6.45pm.

Practicalities

Price £1,560 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled TAP flights (Air Portugal; aircraft: Airbus 320); private coach for transfers and excursions; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions and donations; all tips; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Supplement for a superior room £120** (price per room, two sharing). **Single supplement £260. Price without flights £1,410.**

Hotel: a comfortable hotel of generous proportions with an air of faded grandeur and old-world charm. Bedrooms are bright, with good storage; some are in need of updating. Adjacent to Rossio Square and rated locally as 5-star but more comparable to 4-star.

How strenuous? A short but busy itinerary with a lot of walking and standing around. Terrain is often uneven and steep. Average distance by coach per day: 12 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

SAXON TRANSYLVANIA

TOWNS, VILLAGES & FORTIFIED CHURCHES ON THE EDGE OF EUROPE

8–16 June 2012 (MY 272)
9 days • £2,230
Lecturer: Alan Ogden

21–29 September 2012 (MZ 374)
9 days • £2,230
Lecturer: Bronwen Riley

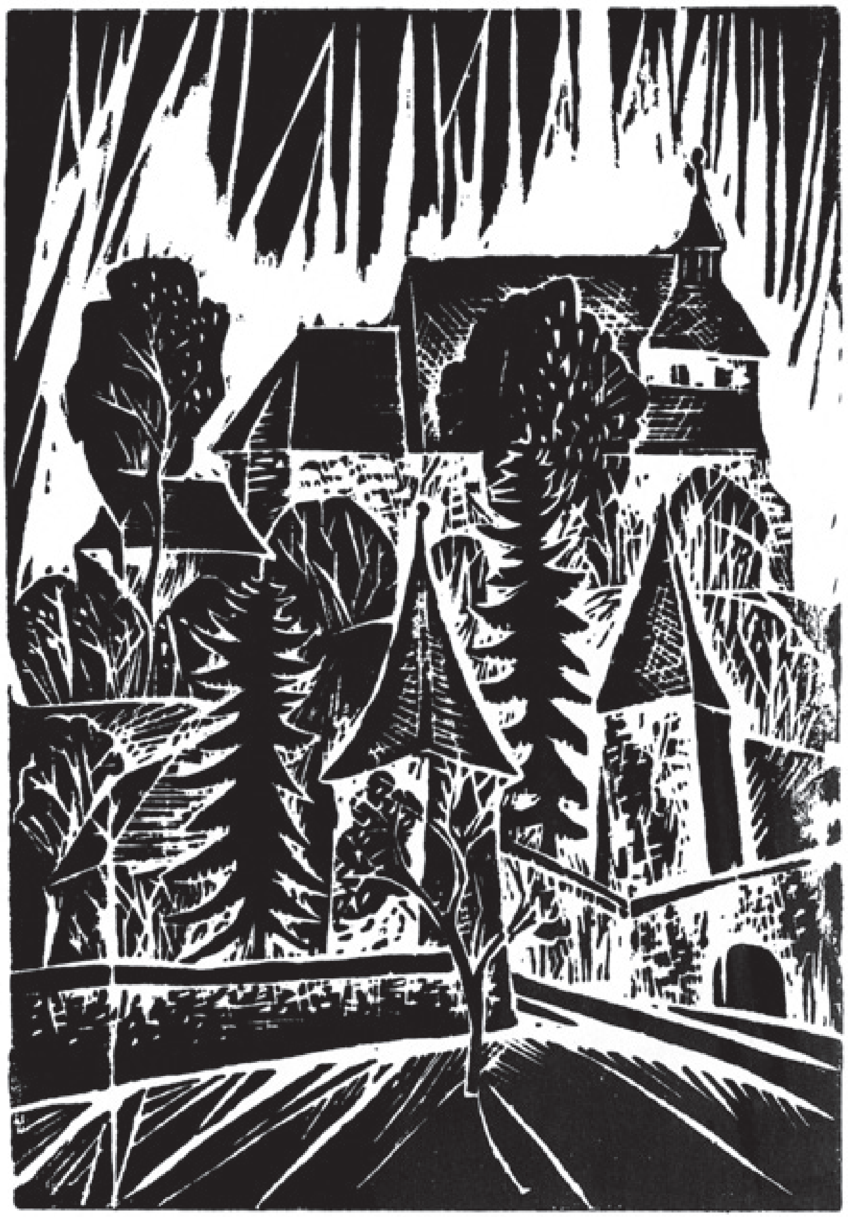
A new tour for 2012.

A region of Romania with enclaves of Hungarian and German culture.

Gothic churches massively fortified against eastern incursions, a unique phenomenon.

Towns emerging from Communist-era depredations to rank with the most picturesque in central and eastern Europe.

Exceedingly attractive countryside where traditional rural life continues.



Sighisoara, woodcut c. 1930.

A tour of Transylvanian fortified churches: surely catering to a somewhat specialist taste? The case in favour: first, this unique phenomenon is visually astounding and historically enthralling. Second, of dozens of surviving examples, we have selected a choice few, each of which exhibits a feature which sets it apart from the others. Third, seeing these places necessitates seeing some extraordinarily unspoilt villages and a way of life you will not see anywhere else. And all this amidst enchanting countryside.

Horses still pull carts and ploughs, chickens and ducks wander the unpaved streets, rows of handsome houses of identical design and layout follow a plan set out in the Middle Ages. Many of these 'Saxon' villages date to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries when north Europeans, predominantly Germans, were recruited to migrate to Europe's borderlands to farm, build, mine and trade. In due course they also became bulwarks against incursions from the East, first Tartars and then, beginning in the fifteenth century, the Ottomans, a more formidable foe. Hence the extraordinary fortifications around their village churches, constructed as citadels to protect the whole village, permanently stocked in expectation of a sudden siege.

Oscillating between independence and Hungarian and Romanian suzerainty, Transylvania is one of the principalities which make up modern Romania (a large country, two thirds the size of Germany). Through good times and bad, the 'Saxons' remained a prominent, even dominant, feature of the region until the end of Communism in 1989. Then, within a couple of years, 90% moved to Germany.

The time to see these villages is now. Congregations are tiny or nonexistent, the villages partially repopulated with people who care nothing about heritage. With the scant resources of the poorest member of the EU, their fate seems to be either irreversible decay or emasculation and Disneyfication for the tourist industry.

The final argument in favour of this tour is that there is plenty else to see. The towns are marvellous survivals, emerging from grime and dereliction to reveal cityscape as lovely and architecturally interesting as anywhere in the former Austro-Hungarian empire. There are the finest collections of 16th to 18th-century oriental carpets you will ever see – hanging in churches. There is a nineteenth-century palace as exquisitely wrought as any in Europe. Oh, and there is a Jan Van Eyck which you can bet the Joneses next door haven't seen.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Bucharest where the first two nights are spent.

Day 2: Bucharest. Ceausescu obliterated swathes of the capital's historic architecture but good things remain. The Lipscani quarter was surprisingly little molested and is now undergoing comprehensive restoration. The Orthodox Stavropoleos Church (1720s) is splendid, and the Peasant Museum well displays artefacts from all Romania. The National Art Museum has a superb collection of mediaeval art as well as Romanian impressionists and masterpieces of European painting. Overnight Bucharest.

Day 3: Sinaia, Viscri. The road north passes through the Transylvanian Alps and the royal summer resort of Sinaia. Here visit the beautiful series of Art Nouveau rooms in a little palace built 1899–1903 for the heir apparent Ferdinand and Queen Marie. Continuing northwards, see the first of that unique Transylvanian phenomenon, the fortified church. A spectacular eruction of walls and towers overlooks the remote, impoverished but well preserved Saxon village of Viscri. Overnight Sighisoara.

Day 4: Sighisoara, Biertan. On top of a hill, natural defensiveness supplemented by impressive military engineering, Sighisoara is a highly picturesque little town. Buildings range from the 13th to the 19th centuries with a fine 15th-cent. church with good furnishings and a superb altarpiece of 1490. Located in an exceptionally lovely valley, hillsides striated with terraces for (now vanished) vines, the splendid Gothic church of Biertan soars above its formidable fortifications and the charmingly modest village below. Overnight Sighisoara.

Day 5: Targu Mures, Malancrav. Targu Mures is endowed with an array of buildings in a Hungarian version of Arts & Crafts and Secessionist styles. The 1913 Palace of Culture – concert hall, art gallery, ceremonial halls – is as fine as any comparable building in Central Europe. Orthodox churches range from the timber and artisanal to the grand and splendidly painted. The village church at Malancrav is celebrated for the remarkably well preserved murals of 1421. Overnight Sighisoara.

Day 6: Sibiu. One of the best preserved of the 'Seven Towns' of Saxon Transylvania, Sibiu has been only patchily restored but contains beautiful squares, fine architecture and a picturesque net of streets, stairways and alleys. The remarkable art gallery in the Brukenthal Palace includes works by Van Eyck, Titian, Lotto and Breughel. Nearby is an open-air museum, one of the best of its kind in Europe with a collection of 350 re-erected vernacular buildings from all over Romania. Overnight Sighisoara.

Day 7: Sighisoara, Prejmer. There is free time in the morning in Sighisoara. Possible activities include the Monastery Church and the History Museum. On the way to Brasov, stop at Prejmer for one more fortified church. The inner face of the 12m curtain wall is spectacularly encased with emergency accommodation and storage chambers. First of two nights in Brasov, formerly the leading city of Transylvania.

Day 8. Brasov. With a wonderful jumble of facades from, principally, the 18th to the early 20th centuries, Brasov is as handsome a provincial city as anywhere in eastern Europe. The Black Church is the largest Gothic church in Romania, and the interior is enlivened with nearly 100 oriental carpets. Much of the day is free to enjoy the streetscape, the cafés, the museums (the Ethnographical collection is fascinating). Outside the walls, there is a cable car to the top of an adjacent hill. Overnight Brasov.

Day 9: Sinaia. Return to the mountain resort of Sinaia, this time to see Peles Palace, summer retreat of the Romanian royal family, built, extended and embellished 1875–1914. The sequence of sumptuous interiors, with astonishingly richly carved woodwork, is as fine as any of its sort in Europe, and the original contents are intact. Descend to the Wallachian plain and fly from Bucharest, returning to Heathrow c. 6.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,230 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 321); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; 3 lunches and 6 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £250. Price without flights £1,990.**

Hotels. Bucharest (2 nights): a centrally located 5-star hotel with excellent service and facilities. Sighisoara (4 nights): a new hotel in the lower town 8 minutes on foot to the upper town. Decor tends to peasant chic, but it is comfortable and rooms are of a good size and standard. Brasov (2 nights): a large multi-storey slab conveniently (if shockingly) situated next to the historic centre. Pretentious but adequately comfortable despite traces of its communist-era genesis. Service in all these hotels is generally helpful, smiley and efficient. All are locally rated as 5-star, though they would be 4-star or less in most other countries.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking in city centres and in villages over terrain that is often uneven, sometimes unpaved and not infrequently steep. Sure-footedness is essential; if you regularly use a walking stick, this tour would be challenging. Participants ascend the higher parts of churches and fortifications entirely at their own risk! There is a lot of coach travel, including six journeys of around two hours, over roads of variable quality. Outside big towns, loos are nonexistent or dire. Average distance by coach per day: 130 km.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

NEW

Klimt & Secessionist Vienna.................. 16
Connoisseur's Prague.............................. 24
Opera in Oslo, Gothenburg & Copenhagen 26
Helsinki Opera 37
Brittany 38
Cézanne in Paris.................................... 44
Matisse & his World 45
Cave Art of France 49
Music in the Saxon Hills........................ 62
Dürer & Riemenschneider..................... 68
Walking on Samos & Chios 73
Der Rosenkavalier at La Scala 84
Parma Verdi Festival.............................. 84
The History of Medicine 99
Leonardo & Michelangelo................... 114
Sardinia.. 124
Walking in Sicily.................................. 125
Gastronomy & Walking in Lebanon... 128
Rabat, Fez & Marrakech...................... 130
Norway: Art, Architecture, Landscape 131
Saxon Transylvania............................... 137
British Actions in the Straits................ 158
Mediaeval Middle England 167
Cathedrals of England.......................... 175
Grampian Gardens............................... 175
York at Christmas................................. 175
Charles Dickens.................................... 180
Great Houses of the South West 188
Turner & the Sea 190
The Divine Office: A Choral Festival in Oxford................ 193

ST PETERSBURG

PICTURES & PALACES

20–27 December 2011 (MY 136)
8 days • £2,680
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

14–20 May 2012 (MY 256)
7 days • £3,320
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

17–23 September 2012 (MZ 362)
7 days • £3,320
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

St Petersburg is perhaps the grandest city in Europe, and one of the most beautiful.

Magnificent architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries, especially the palaces of the Romanovs, nobility and merchants.

Outstanding art collections, the Hermitage being the largest art museum in the world.

Founded by Peter the Great in 1703, the city of St Petersburg was intended to demonstrate to the world not only that Russia was a European rather than an Asian nation, but also that it was an immensely powerful one. This 'window on the West' became the capital of the Russian Empire until the government moved back to Moscow in 1918.

Peter's wish was amply fulfilled: with the assistance of Dutch, Italian and French architects – Russians were to take over later in the century once they had mastered the mysteries of Western art and architecture – St Petersburg was laid out as the grandest city in Europe, with buildings on a monumental scale. The palaces of the imperial family and of the fabulously wealthy magnates vied with each other, and with the military establishments and government institutions, to dominate the river front, the broad avenues and the vast squares.

Although one of the newest of Europe's great cities, St Petersburg is the one least affected by 20th-century building. Despite the well-publicised economic and political troubles Russia has undergone in recent years, there has been a surge of cleaning and restoration which has accentuated the beauty of the city.

As impressive as the architecture of St Petersburg are the contents of the museums and art galleries. The Hermitage is one of the world's greatest art museums, with an immensely rich collection of paintings, sculpture, antiquities and decorative arts filling the enormous Winter Palace of the Romanovs. The Russian Museum comes as a revelation to most visitors, for apart from icons (and there is a wonderful collection) the great achievements of Russian painters, particularly during the 19th century, are scarcely known outside the country.

ST PETERSBURG AT CHRISTMAS

Illustration. St Petersburg, Admirality, 20th-century woodcut.

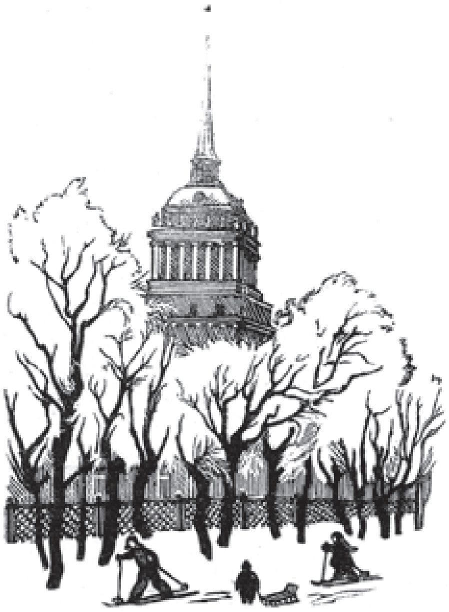
20–27 December 2011 (MY 136)
8 days • £2,680
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow to St Petersburg, arriving at the hotel at approximately 6.00pm.

Day 2. Morning visit to the Peter and Paul Fortress with the cathedral and the Museum of the History of St Petersburg. In the afternoon explore the north bank of the Neva, Vasiliyevsky Island, which as the original intended site of the city has some of St Petersburg's earliest buildings, including the Twelve Colleges and the Menshikov Palace (1710).

Day 3. The Russian Museum, housed in the imposing Mikhailovsky Palace, has Russian painting from mediaeval icons to the vast canvases of the Romantics and Realists of the 19th century. An afternoon walk continues the survey of the architectural magnificence of St Petersburg around the enormous Winter Palace, largely built in a bulky Rococo style by Bartolomeo Rastrelli, the grand sweep of the General Staff Building (1820s), the Neo-Classical buildings of the Synod, Senate and Admiralty, and the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood.



Day 4. Free morning for independent exploration, perhaps to visit the preserved apartment of Dostoyevsky, Pushkin or Rimsky-Korsakova. First visit to the Hermitage, one of the world's greatest art collections, housed in the Winter Palace and contiguous buildings; walk around to grasp the layout and to see the sumptuous interiors, then concentrate on selected aspects of the collections.

Day 5. Full-day excursion to two of the summer palaces about 20 miles from St Petersburg, both set in extensive landscaped parks with lakes and pavilions. At Tsarskoye Selo, the main building is the Catherine Palace by Rastrelli, its richly ornamented interiors painstakingly restored after war damage. At Pavlovsk, also well restored, the graceful Neo-Classical Great Palace with encircling wings was in part built by Scotsman Charles Cameron.

Day 6: Christmas Day. The Alexander Nevsky Monastery is an extensive Baroque layout and cemetery with graves of many famous Russians. Rastrelli's Smolny Convent and Cathedral comprise a superb Baroque confection. Free afternoon.

Day 7. The classical Kazan Cathedral is distinguished by its colonnaded forecourt. Visit the 19th-century Yusupov Palace, scene of Rasputin's murder and one of the finest in the city with its private theatre, and the Cathedral of St Nicholas with gilded domes and cupolas. An afternoon in the Hermitage, this second visit allows time to pursue individual interests among the collections.

Day 8. A free morning, perhaps for the places not yet visited such as the City museum, the Marble Palace or Academy of Arts. Drive to the airport for the late afternoon flight to Heathrow, arriving c. 6.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,680 (deposit £300) This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 321); travel by private coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 6 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and a local guide. **Single supplement £220. Price without flights £2,420.**

Hotel: an excellently located superior hotel in the city centre, within easy walking distance of the Hermitage. Very comfortable, with good service and restaurant.

Visas: British citizens and most foreign nationals require a visa (current cost c. £80 – not included in the price of the tour). We will advise on the procedure but you will need to send your passport to the Russian Consulate in the two month period before departure. Visa issuing times vary from country to country but UK residents should expect to be without their passport for approximately 2 weeks.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of standing in galleries and walking on this tour. Traffic congestion means coach journeys can be long and frustrating. Average distance by coach per day: 13 miles.

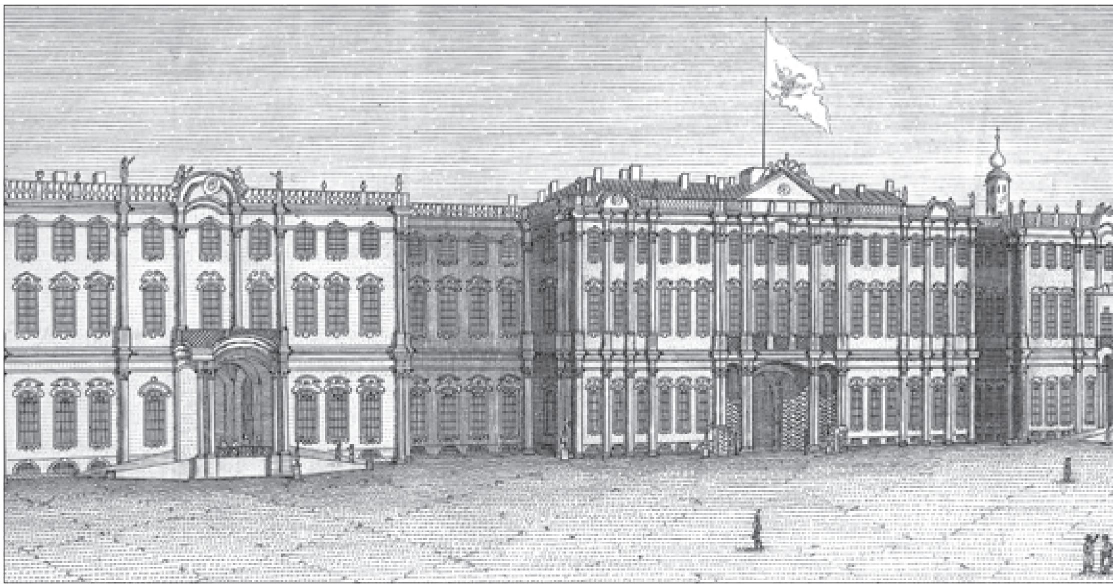
Weather: temperatures will be well below zero and snow is likely. Buildings are well heated.

Music: details of opera and ballet performances will be sent to participants about one month before the tour and tickets can be requested.

Small group: between 10 and 20 participants.

CHRISTMAS

Vienna 15
Christmas in the Desert 31
Music in Berlin 56
Budapest 74
Palermo 122
St Petersburg 139
York 175



The Winter Palace, copper engraving c. 1770.

St Petersburg

14–20 May 2012 (MY 256)
7 days • £3,320
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

17–23 September 2012 (MZ 362)
7 days • £3,320
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow to St Petersburg (time in the air: c. 3 hours 15 minutes). There is time to settle into the hotel before dinner.

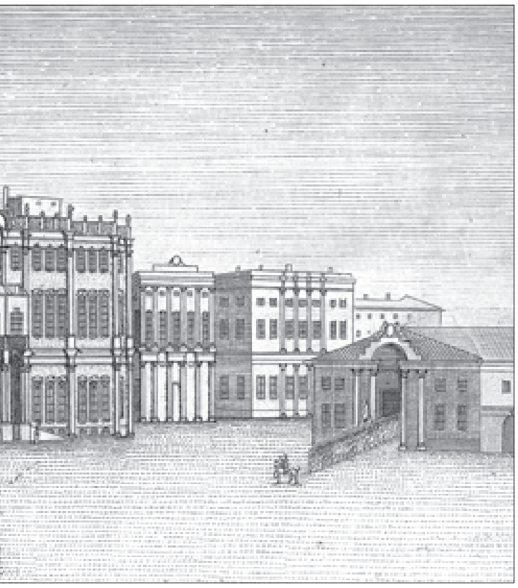
Day 2. Explore the north bank of the Neva and Vasilevskiy Island which, as the original intended site of the city, has some of St Petersburg's earliest buildings including the Twelve Colleges and the Peter-Paul Fortress. Visit the Menshikov Palace, an early 18th-century residence with impressive Petrine decoration. Drive via the Kazan Cathedral with colonnaded forecourt to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, an extensive Baroque layout and cemetery with graves of many famous Russians.

Day 3. Walk to the remarkable Neo-Classical buildings of the Synod, Senate and Admiralty. The first visit to the Hermitage, one of the world's greatest art collections, housed in Rastrelli's Winter Palace and contiguous buildings; walk around to understand the layout and to see the magnificent interiors. An afternoon by coach taking in the sumptuous Marble Palace (exterior), designed by Rinaldi in Baroque and Neo-Classical style and the wonderful group of Smolny Convent and Cathedral, also by Rastrelli.

Day 4. A full-day excursion to two of the summer palaces about 20 miles from St Petersburg, both set in extensive landscaped parks with lakes and pavilions. At Tsarskoye Selo, formerly Pushkin, the main building is the outsized Rococo Catherine Palace by Rastrelli, its richly ornamented interiors painstakingly restored after war damage. At Pavlovsk, also well restored, the graceful Neo-Classical Great Palace with encircling wings was in part built by Scotsman Charles Cameron.

Day 5. The Russian Museum, in the imposing Mikhailovsky Palace, has Russian painting from mediaeval icons to the vast canvases of the Romantics and Realists of the 19th century. An afternoon excursion to Peterhof (by hydrofoil, weather permitting), the magnificent palace on the Gulf of Finland with cascades and fountains.

Day 6. Drive through the city. The Baroque Cathedral of St Nicholas, with its gilded domes, is a memorial to Russian navy sailors who perished at sea. Visit the late 19th-century Yusupov Palace, one of the finest in the city and scene of Rasputin's murder. The second visit to the Hermitage to concentrate on specific aspects of the collections and to pursue individual passions.



Day 7. Some free time for independent exploration: perhaps the Hermitage again, or places not yet visited such as the Dostoyevsky Museum, City Museum, Academy of Arts, or a boat ride on the Neva. Fly to Heathrow, arriving c. 5.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,320 (deposit £350). This includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 321); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 5 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for drivers, restaurant staff, guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and a local guide. **Single supplement £470** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £3,040.**

Hotel: an excellently located superior hotel in the city centre, within easy walking distance of the Hermitage. Very comfortable, with good service and restaurant.

Visas: see 'St Petersburg at Christmas'.

Music: details of opera and ballet performances will be sent to participants about one month before the tour and tickets can be requested.

How strenuous? See 'St Petersburg at Christmas'.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

THE ROAD TO SANTIAGO

THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE THROUGH NORTHERN SPAIN

31 August–12 September 2012 (MY 349)
13 days • £3,380
Lecturer: John McNeill

One of the great historic journeys of the world.

Includes all the major sites and deviates to many lesser-known ones.

An architectural pilgrimage by coach – not a spiritual one on foot – for lovers of Romanesque and Gothic.

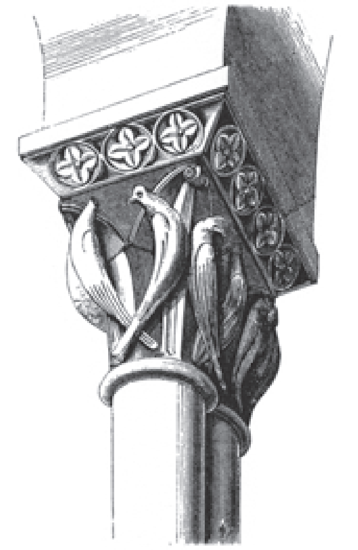
'By land it is the greatest journey an Englishman may go.' So wrote Andrew Boorde, physician and former bishop of Chichester in his 1542 *First Book of the Introduction of Knowledge*. The road to Santiago has rarely been without plaudits, from Godescalc, bishop of Le Puy in 950, to Paula Gerson, scholar and sceptic in 1993.

What was claimed to be the tomb of St James was discovered in 813 in the wilds of Galicia and soon began to attract pilgrims. Roads and bridges were built along the approaches which soon coalesced into a standard route. Hospices and monasteries were founded and secondary shrines became established. Variously described as the *Camino Francés*, the Milky Way and the Road Beneath the Stars, the route exerted a pull which was pre-Christian, but the discovery of an Apostolic tomb and the renewal of the infrastructure conspired to make Santiago the most celebrated of all mediaeval journeys – a byword for Chaucer's pilgrims, a destination to vie with Jerusalem and Rome.

The funds poured into such an enterprise were immense, resulting in an incomparable range of mediaeval – particularly Romanesque – and Renaissance monuments. With cathedrals such as Burgos, León and Santiago, monasteries of the calibre of San Millán de la Cogolla, Silos and Leyre, the paintings of Jaca and Miraflores, the metalwork of San Isidoro, the textiles of Las Huelgas, the road to Santiago does not want for masterpieces.

But equally impressive is the landscape, a memorial backdrop through which all must pass – the limestone cliffs and tumbling watercourses of Aragón and Navarre, the forests of chestnut, oak and acacia of the Rioja, the vast wheat fields of Castile and the green, slate-divided fields of Galicia.

We have two itineraries in 2012: The Road to Santiago – travelling by coach – and Walking to Santiago. They are markedly different in focus; the former is very much an architectural tour, and the latter a walking tour. But both are journeys in which you are conscious always of participating in a thousand-year-old flow of humankind which constitutes one of the most powerfully felt shared experiences in the spiritual and aesthetic history of Europe.



Detail from Santiago Cathedral, engraving c. 1890.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 4.30pm from London Heathrow to Bilbao. Drive to Argómaniz (80 km). Overnight Argómaniz.

Day 2: Pamplona, Roncesvalles. The day is spent in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Reflecting its proximity to France, Pamplona cathedral has a cloister which constitutes perhaps the finest achievement of High Gothic in Spain. Roncesvalles Pass was scene of the famed rearguard action of Charlemagne's paladin Roland, and has a renowned pilgrims' church and hospice. Drive through the spectacular gorge of the Urrobi river. First of two nights in Sos del Rey Católico.

Day 3: Sos del Rey Católico, Sangüesa, Leyre, Jaca. At Sos, the church of San Esteban has a frescoed apse. Sta María la Real in the little town of Sangüesa has superb architectural sculpture, including some by a craftsman from Burgundy. The monastery of San Salvador de Leyre maintains Gregorian offices in a fascinating church with a good crypt and western portal. Jaca, below the Somport pass, has a Romanesque cathedral with a magnificent collection of mediaeval wall paintings. Overnight Sos del Rey Católico.

Day 4: Eunate, Puente la Reina. At Eunate a mysterious round chapel with encircling arcade, rising from the midst of a cornfield. Puente la Reina is the point where pilgrim roads from

France converged, and is equipped with hospices, churches and an amazing bridge. Overnight Sto Domingo de la Calzada.

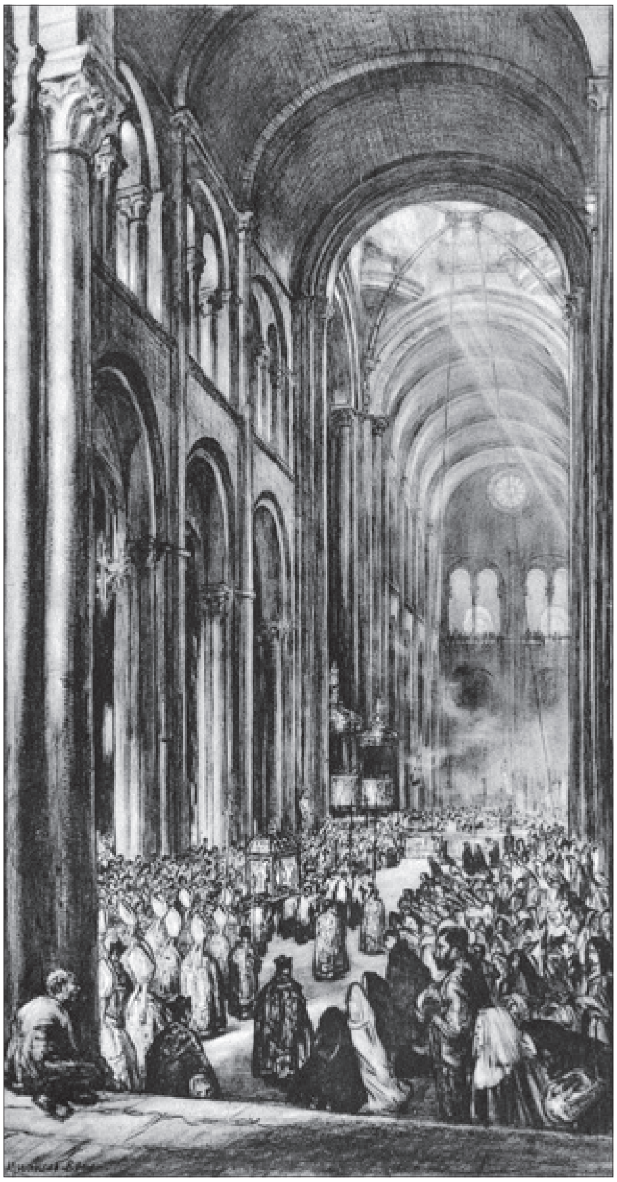
Day 5: Nájera, Sto Domingo de la Calzada, Burgos. See the Royal tombs at Santa María la Real in Nájera. Sto Domingo cathedral has Renaissance and Baroque accretions, and a cockerel still crows over the shrine of the saint. Arrive at Burgos, which grew up at the foot of the fortress of the Kings of Castile. The magnificent cathedral is crowned by a multitude of pinnacles and open-work spires and combines French and German styles; remarkable vaults, 16th-cent. choir stalls and a wealth of sculpture. Two nights in Burgos.

Day 6: Burgos, Quintanilla, Sto Domingo de Silos. Free morning in Burgos. In the afternoon drive to the Visigothic chapel at Quintanilla de las Viñas. Sto Domingo de Silos is the largest and finest Romanesque monastery in Spain, and has an epoch-making 12th-cent. cloister with magnificent sculpture. Overnight Burgos.

Day 7: Burgos, Carrión de los Condes. The Carthusian monastery and royal mausoleum of Miraflores has superb 15th-cent. sculpture by Gil de Siloé. Just outside Burgos is the Early Gothic convent of Las Huelgas Reales, a place of royal burial. Pressing westwards, we stop at San Miguel de la Escalada, an elegant Mozarabic gem. First of two nights in León.

Day 8: León. Former capital of the ancient kingdom of León, the city has many outstanding mediaeval buildings. The royal pantheon of San Isidoro is one of the first, and finest, Romanesque buildings in Spain, with important sculptures. The cathedral is truly superb: Rayonnant Gothic, with impressive stained glass. The monastery of San Marcos (our hotel) has a splendidly exuberant Plateresque façade. Overnight León.

Day 9: Sta Cristina de Lena, Orbigo, Villafranca del Bierzo. Drive through the Puerto de Pájares (mountain pass) to Sta Cristina de Lena, an exquisite 9th-cent. church. Return to the *camino* via the valley of the Luna. Puente de Orbigo is a 13th-cent. bridge which carried pilgrims over the River Orbigo. Villafranca del Bierzo was an ancient haunt of hermits and anchorites and subsequently studded with churches and hospices. Overnight Villafranca del Bierzo.



Santiago Cathedral, after a drawing by Muirhead Bone 1938.

Day 10: Villafranca to Santiago. Three churches punctuate the final stretch of the journey: O Cebreiro, site of a great Eucharistic miracle, Portomarín, a Templar foundation guarding the bridge over the Miño and Vilar de Donas, decayed and evocative knights' church. Finally: Santiago de Compostela, goal of the pilgrimage. Three nights in Santiago.

Day 11: Santiago de Compostela. The morning is dedicated to the great pilgrimage church, the shrine of St James, one of the most impressive of all Romanesque churches; also outstanding treasuries. Explore the university quarter and the narrow picturesque streets and visit Sta María del Sar, where walls splayed and buttressed support a charming Romanesque church against its cloister. Overnight Santiago.

Day 12: Santiago de Compostela. Free day.

Day 13: Santiago de Compostela. Drive around midday to La Coruña. The flight arrives in London Heathrow at c. 3.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,380 (deposit £350). This includes: air travel (economy class) on Vueling flights (Airbus 320); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 9 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for drivers and waiters; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £390** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £3,200.**

Hotels: in Argómaniz (1 night): 3-star parador out of town, simple rooms. In Sos del Rey Católico (2 nights): 4-star parador with views of surrounding countryside. In Sto Domingo de la Calzada (1 night): 4-star parador in the heart of town. In Burgos (2 nights): 4-star hotel in the centre of town. In León (2 nights): 5-star parador in grandiose Plateresque pilgrim hostel. In Villafranca del Bierzo (1 night): 3-star parador, recently renovated. In Santiago de Compostela (3 nights): 5-star parador, for centuries the abode of the grander pilgrims. Most paradors insist on half-board so dinners are mainly in hotels.

How strenuous? We stress that this is a long tour with a lot of coach travel, seven hotels and a lot of walking, often on uneven ground. The tour would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. Average distance by coach per day: 85 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

WALKING TO SANTIAGO

ON FOOT FOR SELECTED SECTIONS OF THE PILGRIMS' WAY

5–16 June 2012 (MY 268)
12 days • £2,980
Leaders: Adam Hopkins
& Gaby Macphedran

7–18 September 2012 (MZ 352)
12 days • £2,980
Leaders: Adam Hopkins
& Gaby Macphedran

The last great pilgrimage route in Christendom which still attracts walkers; scenically wonderful with much fine architecture.

Selected sections from the Pyrenees through northern Spain to Compostela.

Walking in comfort: good hotels; luggage transferred separately; maximum of 15 participants.

Still one of the most splendid walking routes in Europe, the *Camino de Santiago* runs almost 500 miles across northern Spain to the supposed tomb of St James, Sant Iago. Normally, the journey takes a month on foot. We are setting out to walk the highlights in twelve days, taking in the most historically charged and beautiful sections.

For earlier pilgrims, the lure was a reduction of the soul's time in Purgatory; now the motives are more usually historical and cultural, and sometimes also deeply personal. Religious commitment is less in evidence. But for many who undertake the magnificent walk there is also a spiritual dimension.

Asceticism is not a necessary ingredient. Instead of staying in bunk beds in pilgrim hostels, we repose in hotels, some among Spain's finest. Instead of carrying huge packs with all our necessities, we carry only our own day sacks while the luggage moves by road. Our vehicles intersect with walkers every two or three hours, allowing respite to anyone who needs to ride. We eat well, often picnicking in deep country, and try some of the fine wines grown along the route. But as with all pilgrimages this is a linear walk, involving a new hotel each night except on two rest days.

We are like pilgrims, rather than tourists, visiting monuments along the route and what time and tiredness allow at the end of the day's walking. There will be interpretative commentary by the lecturer and an introduction to the major buildings. But the experience of walking the *camino* is what is essentially on offer, along a route which has for centuries compelled the imagination.

From 'The Foreign Tour of Brown, Jones & Robinson' 1904.

Itinerary

Day 1: Biarritz to Roncesvalles. Leave from Biarritz Airport following the arrival of the flight from London Stansted (currently 3.05pm) (flights are not included – see below). Drive to Roncesvalles for the night.

Day 2: Roncesvalles to Lintzoáin/Erro, total walk 16 km. Weather permitting, we start at the summit of the pass and drop down on foot to Roncesvalles, traditional starting point of the pilgrimage in Spain. It has a fine collegiate church preserving memories of Sancho the Strong of Navarre. From here, walk downward through rustic, gentle sub-Pyrenean landscape and stately stone-built villages. After a picnic lunch, drive to the Monasterio de Yuso at S. Millán de la Cogolla. Overnight S. Millán.

Day 3: Nájera to Santo Domingo de la Calzada, total walk 20 km. Drive to Nájera, another of the burial places of the royal house of Navarre. Climb through red sandstone with vines in rocky corners, through varied irrigated crops and out into rolling wheat country with mountains lying north and south - this is a good day for striding out. Lunch is in a village café. Afternoon walkers continue to Santo Domingo de la Calzada where there is time to visit the cathedral. Overnight Sto Domingo.

Day 4: Villafranca Montes de Oca to Agés, total walk 15.8 km. Begin with an hour's walk uphill into mildly mountainous country, passing a disturbing monument to victims of Civil War assassination. Cross a plateau and continue through pine and oak forest to a beautiful valley enclosing the monastery of San Juán de Ortega (fine Gothic church). Picnic in the woods. Afternoon walkers continue to the village of Agés. Drive to Burgos for the first of two nights.

Day 5: Burgos, rest day. Rest, nurse feet and loiter in this Castilian city rich in memories of El Cid and mediaeval pilgrimage, Wellington and Franco. There is time to see the magnificent cathedral, the charterhouse of Miraflores (superb sculpture by Gil de Siloé), and the monastery of Las Huelgas (fine architecture and images relevant to the *camino*). Overnight Burgos.

Day 6: León, rest day. Drive to León with its fine Gothic cathedral and Spain's finest stained glass. See also the church of San Isidoro, with unique Romanesque paintings. The Parador of S. Marcos, our hotel, is one of the major historic buildings of the pilgrim route Overnight León.

Day 7: Puente de Orbigo to Astorga, total walk 18 km. About one hour into the walk, we make a modest ascent and suddenly the plains are over. There are two or three small climbs this morning through remote-feeling countryside and wheat fields ending in shady corners under small oaks. We picnic with views down to the cathedral of Astorga. Stalwarts continue the walk into town. Here, the bishop's palace was designed by Gaudí and there is a charming town hall. Overnight Astorga.

Day 8: Astorga to Rabanal del Camino, total walk 20.6 km. Walk out through Astorga's old town. An hour and a half brings us to well-preserved Castrillo de Polvazares, former centre of the interesting Maragatos tribe, obscure in its origins but throughout history Northern Spain's muleteers. A mix of path and lane leads slowly upwards with views opening into the mountains of León. After a picnic lunch continue walking to Rabanal del Camino. Drive from here to Villafranca del Bierzo where the night is spent.

Day 9: Triacastela to Sarriá, total walk 18.5 km. Drive to Triacastela via O Cabreiro, first port of call in Galicia for pilgrims with Celtic buildings and ancient church. The walk starts low and climbs through Galician-green valley and into country of tiny hamlets where cows chew the cud in dark mediaeval sheds. Sunken tracks, ferns and ivy abound and there is later a fine upland feel. After a picnic lunch we begin a slow descent to Sarriá. Overnight Sarriá.

Day 10: Sarriá to Ferreiros and Monte del Gozo to Santiago de Compostela, total walk 13 km. Walk from Sarriá to Ferreiros and take a picnic lunch before driving on to Monte del Gozo. Here pilgrims once fell to their knees at the first view of the cathedral spires of Santiago (harder to see now through eucalyptus). Walk through suburbs into increasingly ancient city centre and right into the Parador, another important and beautiful historic building. First of two nights in Santiago de Compostela.

Day 11: Santiago. The cathedral is a Romanesque masterpiece with a magnificent carved portal. Here those who wish may attend Pilgrim's mass at midday. The rest of the day is free.

Day 12. Drive to La Coruña Airport in time for the flight to London Heathrow (currently departing at 2.40pm).

Practicalities

Price: £2980 (deposit £300). This includes: airport transfers from Biarritz (day 1) and to La Coruña (day 12) and all other road travel by comfortable nine-seater vans (flights are not included); accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 9 lunches (5 are picnics) and 8 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; admission costs; tips for waiters; the services of the lecturer and tour manager and additional driver/baggage handler. **Single supplement £320.** (double room for single use).

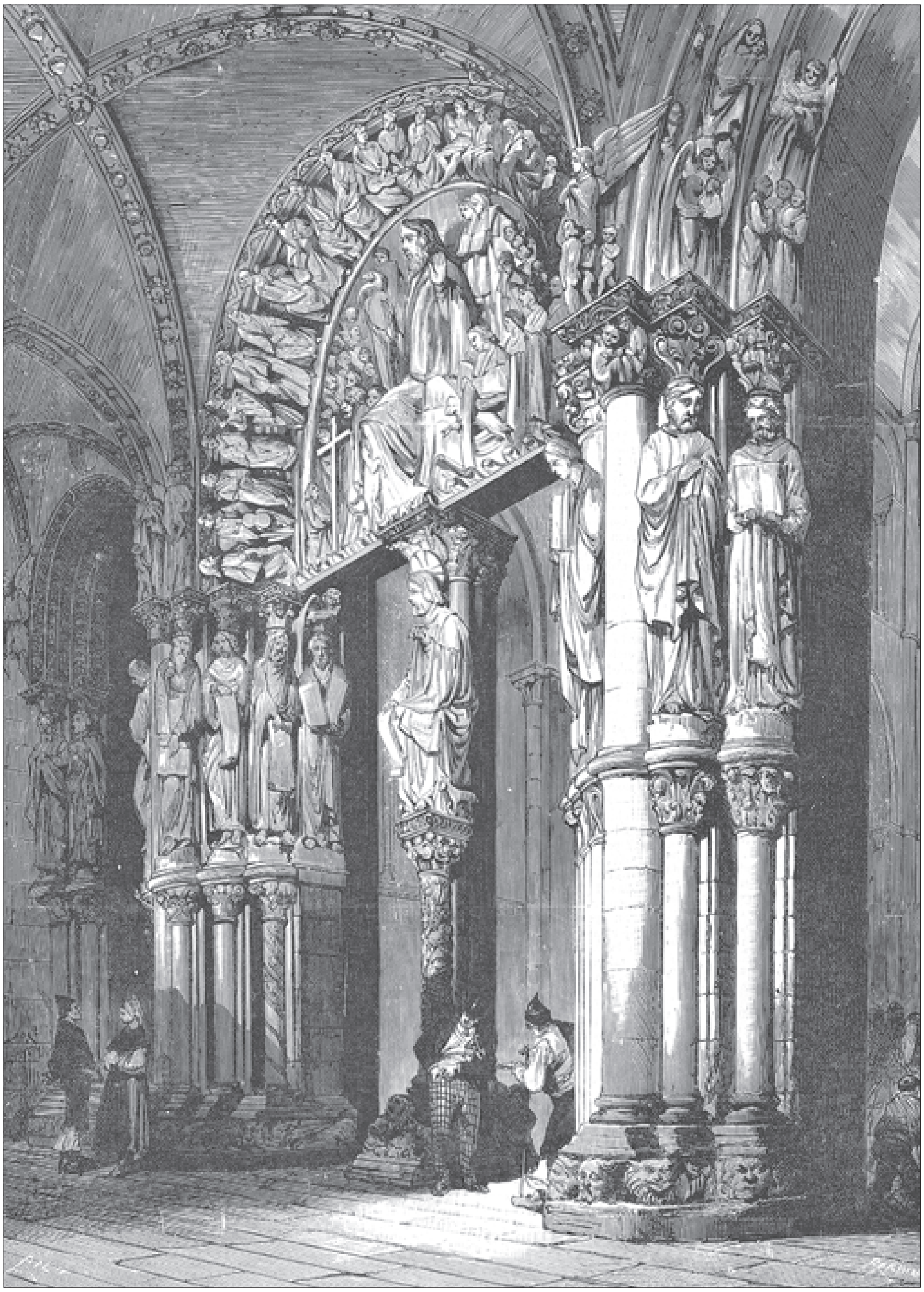
Flights are not included in the cost of the tour as the most convenient outbound flight is with Ryanair and we cannot make a booking without knowing the passenger name. We can book flights on your behalf, quoting the fare at the time of booking, or you can make the bookings yourself using the details below.

We provide airport transfers around the following flights:

Day 1: depart London Stansted 12.15, arrive Biarritz 15.05 (Ryanair flight FR 372).

Day 12: depart La Coruña 14.40, arrive London Heathrow 15.40 (Vueling VY 7100).

Hotels: as quasi-pilgrims we lodge in a different place each night except on rest days, ranging from relatively workaday to very grand: Roncesvalles (1 night): recently opened 3-star hotel in an 18th-cent. building. In S. Millán de la Cogolla (1 night): 4-star hotel beside the monastery of Yuso. In Sto Domingo de la Calzada (1 night): 4-star parador, former mediaeval pilgrim hospital. In Burgos (2 nights): 4-star hotel in a converted palace. In León (1 night): 5-star parador in grandiose Plateresque pilgrim hostel. In Astorga (1 night): 3-star modern hotel in the centre. In Villafranca del Bierzo (1 night): newly-refurbished parador. In Sarriá (1 night): a modern hotel near river. In Santiago de Compostela (2 nights): 5-star parador, in the former pilgrims' hospital.



Santiago Cathedral, Portico de la Gloria, wood engraving c. 1870.

How strenuous? We cover up to 82 miles of the 500 mile route with an average of 10–14 miles walking per day. Fitness is essential; do not book this tour in order to get fit. Participants should be used to walking cross-country, uphill and down and be able to walk pleasurably for several hours at a time. Safety and comfort are our main concern and there are opportunities to retire.

Small group: between 7 and 15 participants.

CASTILE & LEÓN

ANCIENT KINGDOMS IN THE HEART OF SPAIN

17–26 October 2011 (MY 994)
This tour is currently full.

17–26 September 2012 (MZ 363)
10 days • £2,640
Lecturer: Dr Tom Nickson

Spain's most beautiful cities: Salamanca, Segovia, Avila.

Architectural magnificence throughout including the cathedrals of Burgos and León. Much fine sculpture as well.

Walled villages, grand monasteries, hilltop castles and a backdrop of vast, undulating landscape.

Includes palaces of La Granja (18th-century) and El Escorial (16th-century).

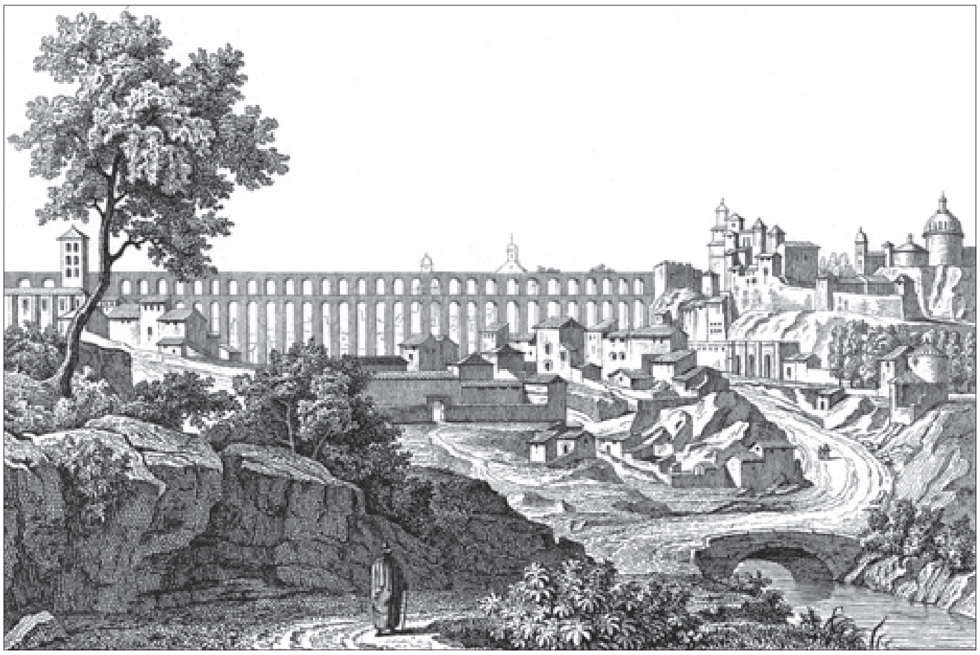
Good food: suckling pig, slow-roast lamb and kid; good wine of the Ribera de Duero.

Since their fusion under one crown in the eleventh century, the ancient kingdoms of Castile and León have been responsible for some of the most emblematic periods of Spanish history. These former rival territories established themselves as the heart of Spain and exerted great influence over language, religion and culture far across the mediaeval map. Innumerable castles were built here (hence 'Castile') for this was the principal battleground of the Reconquista, the five-hundred-year war of attrition against the Moors which reclaimed Spain for Christendom.

The region occupies much of the Meseta, the vast and austere plateau in the centre of the Iberian peninsula. Here are many of Spain's finest cities, buildings and works of art. Lovers of Romanesque will feel particularly satisfied for there are many excellent examples of the style. Great Gothic churches are another magnificent feature, the cathedrals at León, Burgos, Segovia and Salamanca among them. French, German and English influences are to be found, though the end result is always unmistakably Spanish.

Another striking aspect of the tour is the wealth of brilliant sculpture, especially of the late-mediaeval and Renaissance periods. Castles, of course, abound, and some of the defensive curtain of frontier cities such as Avila are remarkably well preserved.

As well as the prominent cities, we include a number of lesser-known places, all strikingly attractive, many with outstanding buildings or works of art, all barely visited by tourists.



Segovia, engraving c. 1840.

Itinerary for 2012

Day 1: Avila, Salamanca. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Madrid. Drive to Avila: a fortress town built during the Reconquista, it retains its entire circuit of 11th-century walls complete with battlements and 88 turrets. The 12th-century Basilica of San Vicente has fine sculpture. First of two nights in Salamanca.

Day 2: Salamanca. Distinguished by the honey-coloured hue of its stone, Salamanca is one of the most attractive cities in Spain and home to its most prestigious university. See the magnificent 16th-century Gothic 'New Cathedral' and austere Romanesque 'Old Cathedral', the 18th-century Plaza Mayor and superb, elaborate Plateresque sculpture on the façades of the university and church of San Esteban. The University has 15th- and 16th-century quadrangles, arcaded courtyards and original lecture halls. The Convento de las Dueñas has a Plateresque portal and an irregular, two-tiered cloister.

Day 3: Zamora, León. On the Roman road that connected Astorga to Mérida, Zamora rose to importance during the Reconquista as a bastion on the Duero front. Much of its Romanesque architecture survives, including the cathedral of Byzantine influence. Drive to León, former capital of the ancient kingdom and visit the monastery of San Marcos (our hotel) with an exuberant Plateresque façade, magnificent late-Gothic church, Renaissance chapels and fine choir-stalls. First of two nights in León.

Day 4: León. A morning walk to some of the outstanding mediaeval buildings of the city. The royal pantheon of San Isidoro is one of the first, and finest, Romanesque buildings in Spain, with important sculptures. The cathedral is truly superb Rayonnant Gothic with impressive stained glass. The afternoon is free to visit the archaeological or contemporary art museums.

Day 5: San Miguel de Escalada, Burgos. The beautiful, remote church at San Miguel de Escalada displays a fusion of Visigothic and Islamic building traditions. Continue to Burgos, early capital of Castile, whose Cathedral combines French and German Gothic styles, has remarkable vaults and 16th-century choir stalls. First of two nights in Burgos.

Day 6: Burgos, Santo Domingo de Silos. On the outskirts of Burgos is the convent of Las Huelgas Reales with its important early Gothic church. At the Cartuja de Miraflores discover the exuberant polychromed sculpture of Gil de Siloe. There is an afternoon excursion to Santo Domingo de Silos, which has the finest Romanesque monastery in Spain, outstanding for the sculpture of the 12th-century cloister.

Day 7: Tordesillas, Toro, Segovia. The convent of Tordesillas, spectacular combinations of Islamic and Netherlandish artistic traditions, was once the palace of Pedro the Cruel and his lover, Maria de Padilla. In the small town of Toro see the superb mediaeval sculpture in the collegiate church. Built on a steep-sided hill, Segovia is one of the loveliest cities in

Spain and architecturally one of the most richly endowed. First of three nights in Segovia.

Day 8: Segovia. Straddling the town, the remarkable Roman aqueduct is one of the biggest in Europe. See the outstanding Romanesque exteriors of San Martín, San Millán and San Esteban. An afternoon walk includes the cathedral, a soaring Gothic structure, and the restored Alcázar (castle), dramatically perched at the prow of the hill.

Day 9: Segovia, La Granja. Free morning; suggestions include the contemporary art museum of Esteban Vicente and the Museum of Segovia. Begin the afternoon at the circular Templar church of La Vera Cruz. Drive to La Granja de San Ildefonso, the palace constructed for Philip V in the early 18th century, with magnificent formal gardens.

Day 10: El Escorial. This vast retreat-cum-palace-cum-monastery-cum-pantheon was built from 1563 to 1584 for Philip II, successfully embodying his instructions for 'nobility without arrogance, majesty without ostentation, severity in the whole'. Fly from Madrid, arriving Heathrow at c. 5.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,640 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Iberia flights (aircraft: Airbus 321); travel by private coach for transfers and excursions out of town centres; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 6 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager; hire of radio guides for better audibility of the lecturer. **Single supplement £320** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,520.**

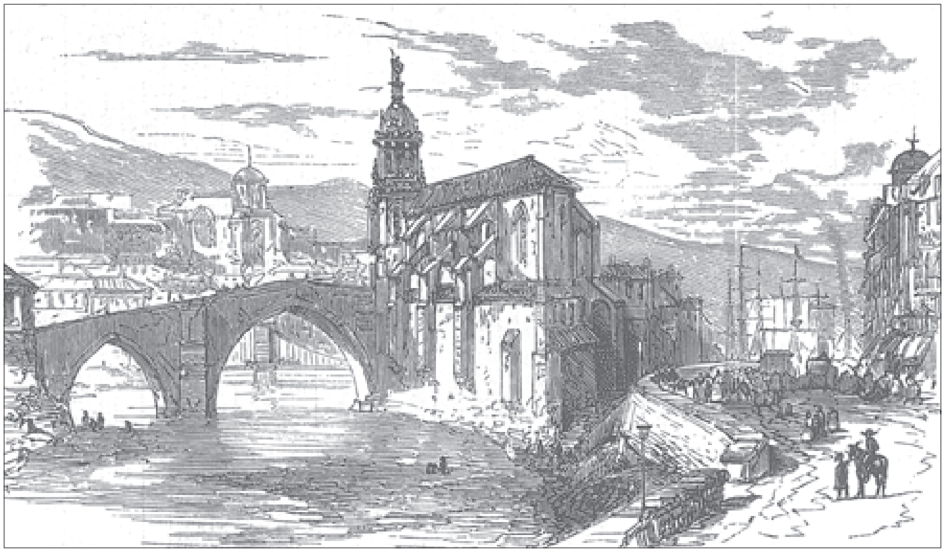
Hotels: In Salamanca (2 nights): an attractive 4-star hotel in a converted palace, close to the Cathedrals and other key sites. In León (2 nights): 5-star parador in grandiose Plateresque building; public areas are impressive, bedrooms less so. In Burgos (2 nights): a 4-star hotel in a converted palace. In Segovia (3 nights): a centrally located 4-star hotel in a converted 16th century *casa-palacio*. Rooms vary in size and some are small but all are well-equipped.

How strenuous? This is a fairly long tour with a lot of walking in town centres, some of it on cobbled streets and uphill. It should not be undertaken by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stairclimbing. Average distance by coach per day: 80 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

BILBAO TO BAYONNE

FOOD, ART & ARCHITECTURE IN THE BASQUE LANDS



Bilbao, wood engraving from 'The Graphic' 1872.

3–10 October 2011 (MY 978)
8 days • £2,760
Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

Ask us for full details or visit
www.martinrandall.com

Long, lazy lunches including two in restaurants with 3 Michelin stars.

Excellent wines of La Rioja-Alavesa.

Architecture by Gehry, Calatrava, Moneo and varied landscapes of coast, plain and mountain.

Three bases: Bilbao, Laguardia, Vera de Bidasoa in the Spanish Pyrenees.

Straddling the Pyrenees and divided between France and Spain, the Basque Country has wonderful and varied scenery, a magnificent range of art and architecture and a culinary tradition which ranks with the best in Europe. It is a land of abundance in many things, though there is one striking exception: tourists are in short supply.

The landscape reaches from the Atlantic coast, indented with natural harbours and the fishing communities from which the wealth of the region has derived since ancient times, to the hills and mountains majestically clothed with broadleaf forests. Both the highlands and the fertile rolling lowlands provide the raw ingredients which supplement the seafood and inspire gastronomic greatness.

The best of Basque cooking mixes a strong sense of tradition with startling innovation. From the all-male dining clubs, where friends cook for each other, to the indoor markets spilling over with smoked idiazabal cheeses and gleaming fresh fish, from the rustic cider clubs to the chic new bars vying for the 'tapas of the year' prize, Basques remain obsessed with the quality and provenance of their food.

Juan-Marie Arzak is the most famous restaurateur in Spain. As godfather to New Basque Cuisine, he has inspired an entire generation of chefs including Martín Berasategui, Pedro Subijana and Hilario Arbelaitz. Together they share no fewer than ten Michelin stars.

From Bilbao we drive a loop through the Rioja Alavesa, the northern rim of the most prestigious wine-making area in Spain and up to the Pyrenees. Between visits to restaurants, wineries and specialist food shops, we linger in mediaeval villages, Gothic churches and Baroque interiors. There is here some fine contemporary architecture by Gehry, Calatrava and Moneo. San Sebastian has a swathe of flamboyant turn-of-the-century buildings while nestling in the upland valleys and clamped to hillsides is a doughty vernacular of remarkable distinctiveness and beauty.

Practicalities – in brief

Price: £2,760 (deposit £250). **Single supplement £240** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,620.**

Hotels: Bilbao (1 night): 5-star hotel opposite the Guggenheim. Laguardia (2 nights): 4-star hotel on the outskirts of the town. Vera de Bidasoa (4 nights): 3-star hotel installed in an 18th-century military building.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking, some of it uphill. Average distance by coach per day: 60 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

GAUDÍ & THE GUGGENHEIM

BILBAO & BARCELONA

3–9 September 2012 (MZ 354)
7 days • £2,290
Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

First-class architecture in two distinct maritime cities: Bilbao and Barcelona.

Contemporary and modernist but also important mediaeval works are seen.

Led by the author of *Gaudí*.

Celebrated immediately upon its opening in October 1997, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is now acknowledged as one of the greatest buildings of the twentieth century. The extraordinary titanium-clad building by the Los Angeles architect Frank Gehry has put the previously ignored city of Bilbao on the wish list of every cultural tourist.

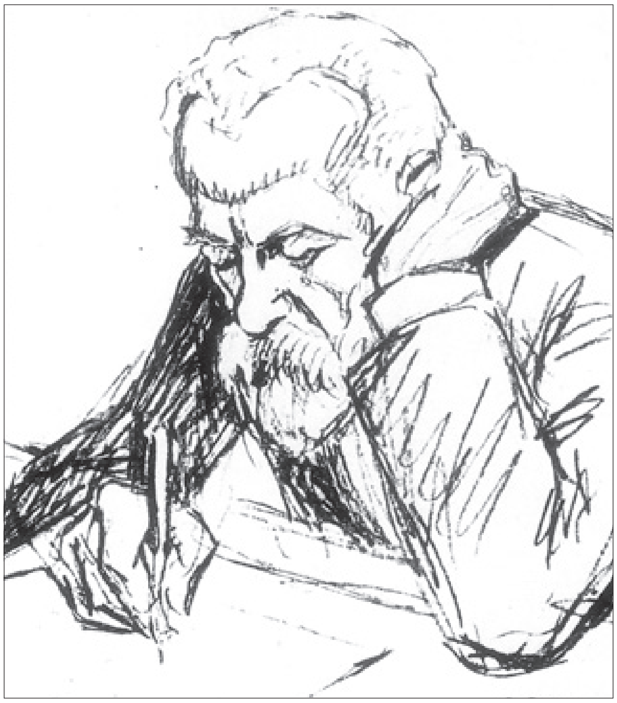
There are similarities between the curvaceous, burnished form on the shore of the Atlantic and the highly individualist buildings by Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926) in Barcelona on the Mediterranean coast. Fantastical, organic and brazen masterpieces frame a century distinguished otherwise by a markedly different orthodoxy of design. Gaudí's creations took the possibilities of Art Nouveau to an unparalleled extreme. Revered by Catalans during his lifetime, regarded elsewhere as an eccentric curiosity for the next half century, Gaudí is now one of the most popular and influential of all architects.

As a candidate for beatification, the first artist since Fra Angelico to enjoy such endorsement, the ultra religious Gaudí has come back into favour as an architect who pioneered an eco-friendly, sculptural and organic style that has led some to describe him as the father of post-modernism.

If Gehry's Guggenheim has been called the signature building of the 20th century it must not be forgotten that it is Gaudí's millennial creation, the Sagrada Familia - started 125 years ago and still decades away from completion - that remains the building that has carried us into the 21st century.

Itinerary

Day 1: fly at c. 4.30pm from London Heathrow to Bilbao. First of two nights in Bilbao.



Drawing of Antoni Gaudí.

Day 2: Bilbao. A walk to view the Calatrava bridge, Norman Foster metro and the exterior of the Guggenheim. Explore this extraordinary building, and in the afternoon see the permanent collection augmented with loans from New York and temporary exhibitions. Overnight Bilbao.

Day 3: Bilbao, Barcelona. In the morning, visit the Museum of Fine Arts, a good collection with many rooms dedicated to Basque painters. Transfer to the airport for the early afternoon flight to Barcelona. Gaudí's Casa Milà, or Pedrera, has an undulating façade and a rooftop walk amongst Gaudí's treetop forest of spirits. First of four nights in Barcelona.

Day 4: Barcelona: early Gaudí. Walk to see the lampposts in Plaça Reial. The Barri Gòtic is a marvellously well-preserved mediaeval quarter with cathedral and Gothic church of Santa Maria del Mar, La Llotja, seat of the stock exchange, and Set Portes. In Ciutadella Park, site of the 1888 Expo, see the turn-of-the-century Zoological Museum. Afternoon on Montjuïc Hill from where there are panoramic views of the city. Visit the National Museum of Catalan Art, which houses one of the finest collections of mediaeval art anywhere, and the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion. Overnight Barcelona.

Day 5: Barcelona: mature Gaudí. Modernista walk in the Eixample, including Casa Vicens, Berenguer House, Casa Comalat, and the Casa Batlló, an exquisitely decorated apartment block. In the afternoon, further visits include a tour of Domenèch i Montaner's splendid Palau de la Musica Catalana *(subject to confirmation one week before visiting)*. Take tea in Els 4Gats where teenage Picasso held his first one-man show. Overnight Barcelona.

Day 6: Barcelona: late Gaudí. Morning walk to the Boqueria, the sumptuous Palau Güell, town house of Gaudí's principal patron and the Tuberculosis Clinic. Continue by coach to the Sagrada Familia, on which Gaudí worked for 43 years. Pass the Hospital de Santa Creu i de Sant Pau en route to Park Güell, the uncompleted 'garden suburb' with sinuous, ceramic-clad structures and Gaudí's own house. Overnight Barcelona.

Day 7: Sitges. 15 km out of Barcelona lies Gaudí's crypt of the Colonia Güell, arguably his greatest work, set amongst the pine trees in an industrial paradise. Continue to Sitges, one of the most delightful towns on the Catalan seaboard. The Museu Cau Ferrat, home of Santiago Rusiñol, one of the major figures in the Catalan cultural revival, has a delightfully eclectic collection. Next door is the Museu Maricel, similarly adorned. *Both museums in Sitges are currently closed for renovation and are due to reopen in 2012.* Continue to Barcelona Airport for the flight to London Heathrow, arriving at c. 6.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,290 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on flights with Vueling and British Airways (Airbus 320); private coach for transfers and excursions outside city centres, and some use of the metro; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £360** (double room for sole use). **Price without international flights £2,130.**

Hotels: in Bilbao (2 nights): a 5-star hotel opposite the Guggenheim, contemporary in design and furnishings. Barcelona (4 nights): 4-star hotel one block from Gaudí's La Pedrera and numerous other modernist buildings. Rooms are modern and comfortable but on the small side.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking, especially in Barcelona, and standing around in front of buildings and in museums. Fitness is essential. Average distance by coach per day: 10 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 20 participants.

ART IN MADRID

THE GREAT GALLERIES

26–30 October 2011 (MY 996)
This tour is currently full.

14–18 March 2012 (MY 180)
5 days • £1,350
Lecturer: Dr Xavier Bray

24–28 October 2012 (MZ 409)
5 days • £1,380
Lecturer: Gail Turner

Two visits to the Prado plus the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection and the Reina Sofia, home to Picasso's *Guernica*.

Lesser-known places include the Sorolla Museum, Archaeological Museum and Goya frescoes at San Antonio de la Florida.

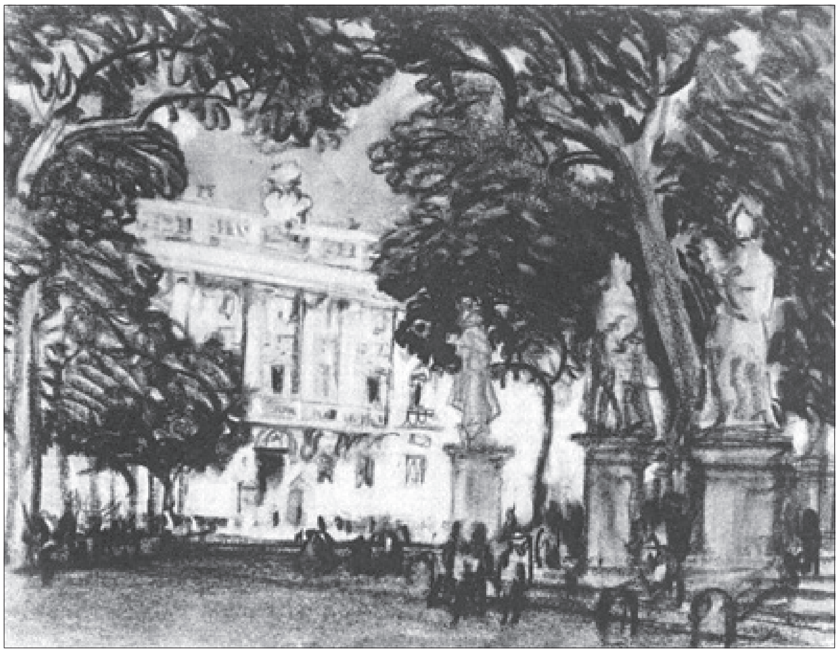
The March 2012 departure coincides with a major exhibition at the Prado – *Treasures from the Hermitage*.

While the Museo del Prado alone might justify a visit to Madrid – and this tour has two sessions there – the city has other excellent collections which reinforce its reputation as one of the great art centres of Europe.

This city of Velázquez and Goya has been enormously enhanced over the years by the installation of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection and the Reina Sofía Museum. Both these and the Prado have undergone major extension work under architects Jean Nouvel (Reina Sofía), Manuel Baquero and Francesc Plá (Thyssen) and Rafael Moneo (Prado). New exhibiting spaces, restaurants and lecture theatres lend even greater lustre to these world-class galleries. Our stints at the 'big three' are interspersed with less-visited collections, many of them recently restored.

The great Spanish painters – including El Greco, Murillo, Velázquez, Goya, and Picasso – are of course magnificently represented on the tour, but the collecting mania of the Habsburgs and Bourbons and their subjects has resulted in a wide range of artistic riches which will surprise and delight. There is a large number of outstanding paintings by Titian and Rubens, for example, and the Prado has by far the largest holding of the bizarre creations of Hieronymus Bosch.

Our March tour coincides with a major exhibition at the Prado entitled Treasures from the Hermitage, offering a unique opportunity to see works on loan from St Petersburg with exhibits from its diverse collection. Works by Caravaggio, Ribera, Velázquez, Monet, Matisse and Picasso will sit alongside drawings by Dürer and Rubens, Bernini sculpture and pieces of Siberian jewellery from Peter the Great's collection.



The Prado, after a drawing by Joseph Pennell 1903.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Madrid. Start with a first visit to the Prado Museum, which is among the world's greatest art galleries; concentrating on the Spanish school. Settle into the hotel before dinner.

Day 2. The morning walk includes the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, home to works by Goya, Zurbarán, Ribera and Murillo, and the Museum of Decorative Arts, with an 18th-century tiled Valencian kitchen. The afternoon is spent at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, housed in the 18th-century Palacio de Villahermosa until its purchase by the Spanish state in 1993 one of the world's largest private art collections.

Day 3. In March 2012 return to the Prado for the Treasures from the Hermitage exhibition. Other tours begin at the Archaeological Museum, good on ancient Iberian civilization and Roman Spain (renovation work ongoing here). Continue to the Lázaro Galdiano Museum, with works by El Greco, Goya and Murillo. The afternoon is free to allow for temporary exhibitions (details nearer the time) or a visit to the 18th-century Royal Palace.

Day 4. By coach to the Sorolla Museum, in the charming house of the eponymous Impressionist painter. Continue to the arcaded, balconied Plaza Mayor, centrepiece of Habsburg town planning. In the afternoon there is a second (third in March 2012) visit to the Prado, this time primarily to see the Italian and Netherlandish schools.

Day 5. Walk via Herzog & de Meuron's Caixaforum (visit dependent on the exhibition at the time) to the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, one of the greatest modern art museums and home to Picasso's *Guernica* plus works by Miró, Dalí and Tàpies. Fly to London Heathrow, arriving c. 5.15pm.

Practicalities

Prices for 2012: £1,350 (March), **£1,380** (October) (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled Iberia Airlines flights (Airbus 320); coach for transfers and excursions; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 3 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £140** (March), **£160** (October). **Price without flights £1,240** (March), **£1,270** (October).

Hotel: a small and excellently located hotel, a short walk from the major museums and opposite the Prado; rated locally as 4-star; café but no restaurant.

How strenuous? A lot of standing. Average distance by coach per day: 5 miles.

Small group: between 8 and 19 participants.

Gastronomic Spain

Art, food & wine in Madrid & Castile

15–22 October 2012 (MZ 398)
8 days • £2,580
Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

Exploration of food in Spanish history and art.

Contrasts fine dining in Madrid with the rustic fare of Segovia and Castilian villages.

Other regions (Catalonia, Galicia, Basque Country) are well represented, as are the world-renowned wines of Rueda and Ribera de Duero.

Great art at the Prado, Romanesque architecture and the Bourbon palace at La Granja.

Spain is without a doubt Europe's best-kept culinary secret. No other country maintains such a strong and passionate link to its gastronomic past, yet no other country's cuisine is so frequently misunderstood. This tour uncovers some of the great secrets of Iberian cuisine and its powerful sense of the regional and also celebrates the variety and depth of Spanish wine.

The wealth and quality of Spanish food, as is to be expected, rests first and foremost on the quality of its primary produce: the acorn-fed hams of the wild Iberian pig, the truffles from Guadalajara, asparagus from Ávila, giant fava beans from La Granja, extra virgin olive oils from Catalonia, wild herbs from Soria, saffron from Teruel, goose neck barnacles from Galicia and cod cheeks from Bilbao.

But Spain's food heritage also holds up a mirror to its complex historical past. Dishes and flavours send out echoes of Greek, Phoenician, Visigoth and Moor. There is the Passover fare of Sephardic Spain, the subtle Arabian sweetmeats, the austerity of Philip II, the extravagances of the Bishop, marzipan pastries and thyme flavoured honey prepared by the Carmelite nuns, pastas from Naples and the explosion in tastes derived from the new produce of the Americas. Then there is the hugely popular street food of the religious fiestas held all over Spain, every saint's day being associated with a different dish.

Madrid – the nation's melting pot – is the only place to start a journey through the astonishing variety of Iberian cuisine. Every region has its supper club and its favourite bar in Madrid. But food means more than just the pleasure of the table. It sits at the heart of *tertulia* culture, with its often passionate and heated debates. From the court to the playhouse, from the nineteenth-century novels of Perez Galdos to the contemporary paintings of Miquel Barceló, food remains the protagonist.

This tour also provides a chance to see some of the dishes of the seventeenth-century table and to steal through its larders courtesy of Velázquez, Zurbarán, Luis Meléndez and Sánchez Cotán. There are tiled Valencian kitchens to see and wonderful examples of Spanish earthenware.

All this is put into context with a journey out into the northern *meseta* plain. Favoured by hot summers which are tempered by the cooling winds blowing off the sierra, the Ribera del Duero – the Golden Triangle – produces some of Spain's finest wines. There is a chance to taste the legendary Vega Sicilia and the extraordinary Pesquera wines of Alejandro Fernández.

But there are other masterpieces that rarely travel – Teofilio Reyes, the wines of the brothers Perez Pascuas or the new reservas of Pago de Carraovejas. The mediaeval wealth of Spain with its booming wool trade is also recorded in its earthier peasant cuisine of lamb roasts, suckling pig and mountain stream trout. Walks through this landscape give us views into monastery gardens, Moorish irrigation systems and the now protected Cañadas Reales, the royal sheep trails that criss-cross Castile.

Wood engraving c. 1860 after a drawing by Gustave Doré.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Madrid. Dinner takes the form of an evening tapas walk through old Madrid. First of three nights in Madrid.

Day 2: Madrid. Morning walk to the Museum of Decorative Arts (with an 18th-century tiled Valencian kitchen) followed by a visit to the National Museum of Archaeology. Walk through the Salamanca quarter for a seafood lunch at one of Madrid's best Galician restaurants. In the evening a sampling of *jamón iberico* (cured ham) with wines to match.

Day 3: Madrid. A visit to the Museo del Prado focuses on food depicted in Goya's tapestry cartoons and the still lives of Sánchez Cotán, Zurbarán and Melendez. Olive oil tasting followed by lunch in the Chamartín quarter. Free afternoon; we suggest the Reina Sofía Museum, Spain's national collection of 20th-century art including Picasso's *Guernica*.

Day 4: La Granja de San Ildefonso, Segovia. Leave Madrid and drive north through the spectacular Navacerrada Pass to the village of Valsaín. Taste the beans of La Granja here before carrying on to San Ildefonso. Walk through the formal gardens of the mountainside Bourbon palace before lunch at José María serving Segovia's famous suckling pig. Early evening walk through the historic centre. First of four nights in Segovia.

Day 5: Ribera del Duero. Drive out into Castilian countryside where Peñafiel's crusader

GASTRONOMIC SPAIN
CONTINUED

castle dominates the landscape of 'The Golden Triangle'. Visit the world-renowned *bodegas* of Alejandro Fernández. Return to Segovia via Sta María la Real de Nieva, convent founded by Catherine of Lancaster in 1393. Light dinner savouring 'New Castilian' cuisine.

Day 6: the Royal Sheep trails. Follow the Cañadas Reales, mediaeval highways of shepherds across Castile. Visit the Romanesque church at Sotosalbos, home of the 12th-century gourmet priest Arcipreste de Hita. Game and wild mushroom lunch. Walk through the picturesque walled village of Pedraza followed by an early evening tasting of Vega Sicilia and other legendary great wines.

Day 7: Sepúlveda, Segovia. Sepúlveda is one of Castile's best preserved *meseta* towns with Romanesque churches and cliff-hanging Jewish quarter. Typical wood-fired roast lamb lunch. Free afternoon in Segovia with a final dinner of immense originality.

Day 8. Late morning departure for Madrid Airport, arrive Heathrow at c. 4.30pm

Practicalities

Price: £2,580 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on Iberia Airlines flights (Airbus 321); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 6 lunches and 4 dinners (including the ham tasting and tapas walk) with wine, water and coffee; all wine tastings; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £260** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,470.**

Hotels: in Madrid (3 nights): an excellently located hotel, a short walk from the Prado, rated locally as 4-star. In Segovia (4 nights): a charming 4-star hotel in a converted palace; rooms vary in size.

How strenuous? There is a fair amount of walking on this tour, some of it uphill. Lunches tend to be long and large. Average distance by coach per day: 58 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

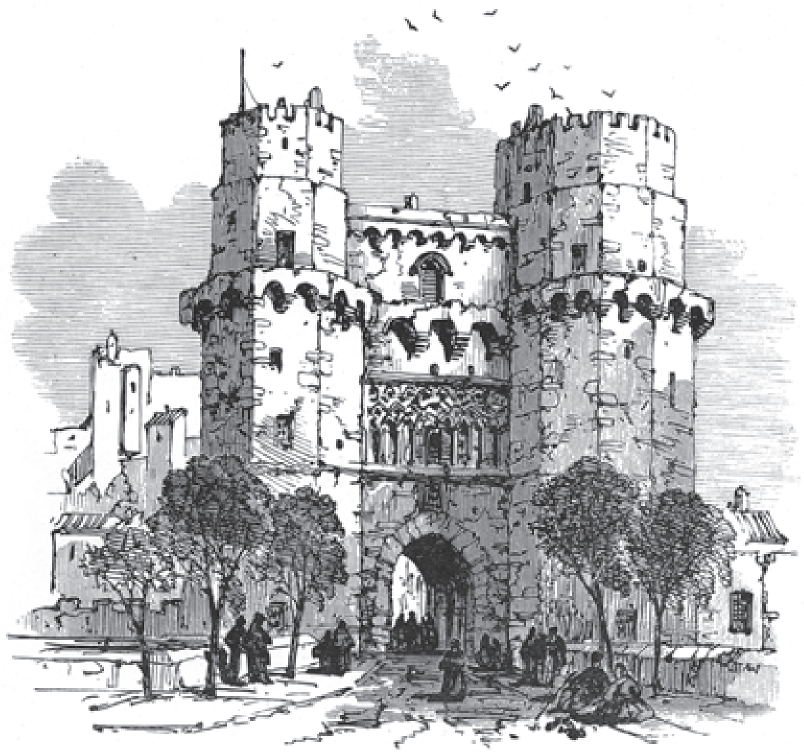
OPERA IN SPAIN

Spring 2012

Details available in Autumn 2011. Contact us to register your interest.

VALENCIA

ART & ARCHITECTURE, MEDIAEVAL TO MODERN



Valencia, Quart Towers, wood engraving 1875 after a drawing by Samuel Read.

8–12 November 2011 (MY 110)
5 days • £1,550
Lecturer: Adam Hopkins

A handsome, vibrant city on the Mediterranean seaboard, excellent for its variety of art and architecture, good food and wine.

Gothic highlights include the Silk Exchange and Royal Chapel at Santo Domingo, while Valencia-born Calatrava contributes the new opera house and science park.

One of Spain's greatest fine arts museums, and its first modern art gallery, Impressionist collections and Arabic ceramics.

Santiago Calatrava, Spain's most distinguished engineer-architect, returned to his home town of Valencia for his most ambitious project to date. The cascading glass, gleaming steel and dazzling concrete of the City of Arts and Sciences combine a series of acrobatic forms against the brilliant Mediterranean sky. Contemporary architecture may have dominated the headlines in the last decade – Calatrava's project was the final instalment of the colonisation of the bed of the diverted River Turia – but evidence of the richness of Valencia's cultural history is evident throughout the city.

The Fine Arts Museum is one of the most important in Spain, excellent in particular for Gothic and Renaissance painting, while the luminous paintings of Valencian Impressionists crop up again and again. The IVAM was Spain's first modern art gallery and has an impressive permanent collection and important temporary exhibitions. The National Ceramics Museum is here too, fittingly, because from the thirteenth century Valencia has been a centre of ceramic production and trade.

Valencian pottery in the Middle Ages was Moorish in technique and design, and it was Arabs who first created a stable economy in the region. Agricultural exports, silk weaving, boat building and paper manufacture all contributed to Valencia's status as a major Mediterranean emporium. The good times continued after Aragón wrested control from the Moors in 1238 and reached a peak in the fifteenth century, Valencia's architectural Golden Age.

The euphoria that greeted the 1982 granting of autonomy has not yet worn off, and the consequences are particularly manifest in achievements in the realm of the arts.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.00am from London Heathrow to Madrid and take the high speed AVE train to Valencia. Arrive in time for an introductory talk.

Day 2. The cathedral, a curious mix of Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque, has a splendid chapter house and paintings by Goya. Great examples of secular 15th-century Gothic include the Generalitat with a sequence of richly decorated rooms *(subject to confirmation)* and the Silk Exchange with its magnificent hall of pillars. Housed in an exuberantly

Churrigueresque palace, the collections of the National Ceramics Museum range from Moorish lustre ware to Picasso.

Day 3. The complex of the Colegio del Patriarca has a Renaissance courtyard and a museum with good paintings. The church of Corpus Cristi has 16th-century frescoes and a *Last Supper* by Ribalta. Santo Domingo, a Gothic friary, has a Royal Chapel with ribless vault and an outstanding 14th-cent. chapter house *(visit by arrangement)*. Cross the 16th-century Royal Bridge to the Fine Arts Museum, one of the best in Spain, with works by Valencian, Spanish and Flemish masters.

Day 4. Drive via the Quart Towers, a massive 14th-century city gateway, to IVAM (Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno): an international collection with good temporary exhibitions. The home and studio of the Benlliure family of Impressionist painters has a large art collection and a romantic garden. Drive to the seafront for a paella lunch overlooking the Mediterranean. Optional excursion to Manises, centre of ceramic production since Arab times, with an excellently presented ceramics museum.

Day 5. Spanning the dry bed of the diverted River Turia is a Calatrava trademark, the 'Peineta' bridge, and, below it, a metro station he designed. Further along is his Ciudad de las Artes y las Ciencias consisting inter alia of an immense arboretum, a soaring edifice that houses the science museum and the opera house (exteriors only). Catch the early afternoon flight to Madrid, and then a connection to London Heathrow, arriving at c. 5.15pm.

Practicalities

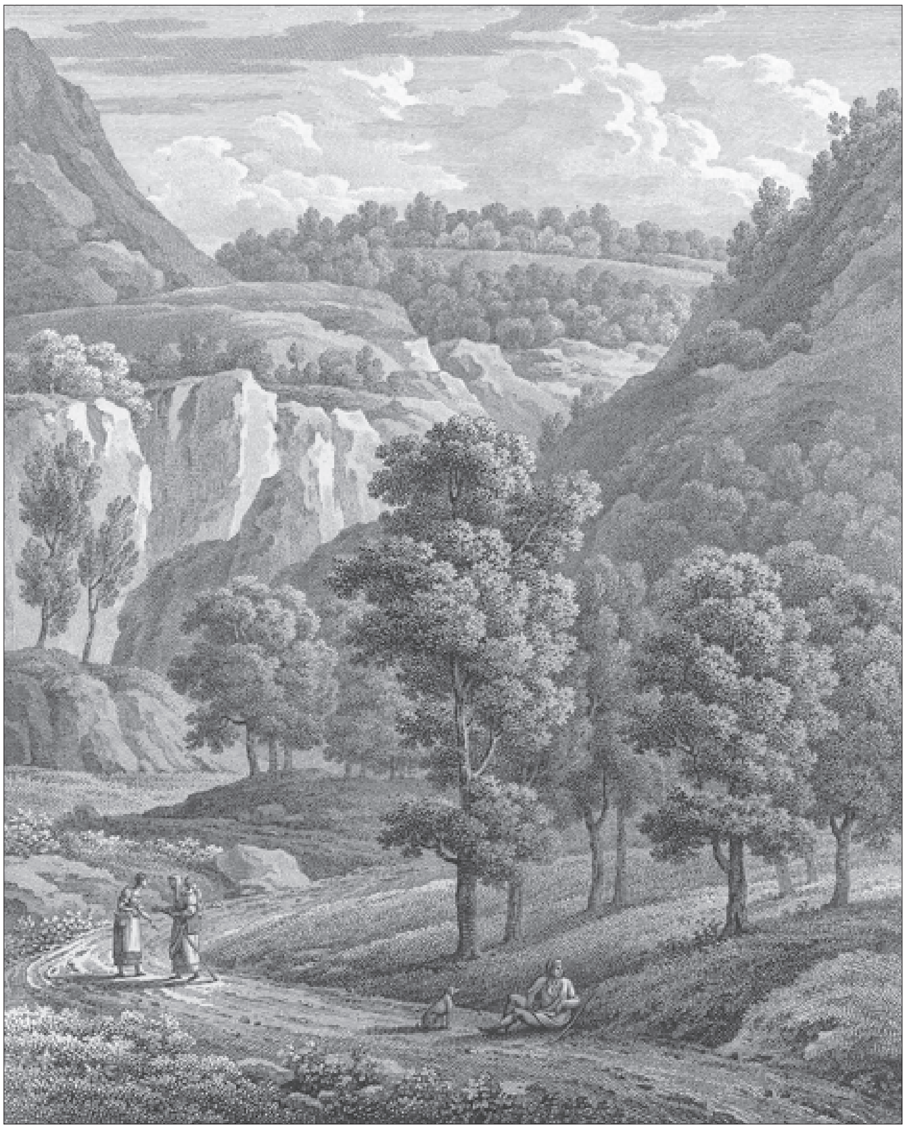
Price: £1,550 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways and Iberia Airlines flights (Airbus A320 and A321); first-class rail travel (AVE) from Madrid to Valencia; private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, guides and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guide. **Single supplement £130** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights and rail £1,190.**

Hotel: a 4-star hotel installed in an 18th-century palace next to the National Ceramics Museum. Rooms are small but well-equipped. There is a bar and restaurant.

How strenuous? Coach access is restricted in the historic centre and there is a lot of walking and standing around in museums. Average distance by coach per day: 9 miles.

Small group: between 8 and 22 participants.

HILL WALKING IN EXTREMADURA



A sierra in southern Spain, copper engraving c. 1790.

11–19 May 2012 (MY 239)
9 days • £2,650
Leaders: Adam Hopkins & Gaby Macphedran

Remote and deeply rural walking in the sierras around Guadalupe and Yuste.

Varied and dramatic landscapes: hills, plains, forests, river valleys, farmland.

Themes include pilgrimage, conquistadors and empire – as well as the natural environment.

Small group: maximum 17 participants.

This is a nine day walking holiday in remote and deeply rural western Spain, set in two distinct mountain groups – and in the plains beneath them. One is the Sierra de Guadalupe, the other the Sierra de Tormantos (a western extension of the Gredos Mountains). Both mountain groups are in the little known region of Extremadura, rich in birdlife and wild flowers, and both are firmly touched by the hand of history.

The Guadalupe range is quartzite. Its wave-like mountain ridges, running north-south, are topped by dramatic dinosaur-back flanges of rock. It shelters the beautiful Monastery of Guadalupe, complete with numinous Black Virgin, goal of an important Marian pilgrimage. This was the main shrine of the *conquistadors*, who ravaged America in the 16th century – a great proportion of them from Extremadura; it is the spiritual centre of modern Extremadura.

We begin with a walk from the main gate of our farmhouse hotel near Trujillo, followed by walks on two successive days on stages of the pilgrimage route to Guadalupe: on the first we enter the mountain range, on the second we walk deeper in and higher. We end with a visit to the Monastery, the Virgin and the famous suite of paintings by Zurbarán, still in the site for which they were painted.

The Sierra de Tormantos is granite country, with huge eroded boulders and running water aplenty. On its northern side is the Jerte valley, with Spain's greatest concentration of cherry orchards. On the southern side is the valley of La Vera with the Monastery of Yuste. To this remote and rustic spot the emperor Charles V, most powerful man in the known world, retired in 1556 in search of a climate of 'perpetual springtime'. The sierra here offers exceptional walking – not least the dramatic route which brought Charles V from the Jerte Valley to La Vera. We spend one day walking in the plains and two days on upland routes, including that of Charles V, or a gentle and beautiful alternative. You choose.

The country around these mountain groups is mostly *dehesa* – that classic Iberian habitat, with evergreen holm oaks and cork oaks standing well-spaced in grazing country. Walking here is more peaceful and calming, through land rich in wild flowers and birdlife.

Itinerary

Day 1: London to Extremadura. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Madrid. Drive south-west into Extremadura arriving at our farmhouse outside the village of Pago San Clemente in time for dinner. First of two nights in Pago San Clemente.

Day 2: Pago San Clemente, Trujillo. Introductory lecture followed by the first walk: an unhurried, circular stroll from our *finca* through vines and fruit trees and then cross-country to a ridge with wide views (c. 8 km). Lunch is in the village bar. This is an area particularly favoured by ornithologists. In the afternoon visit nearby Trujillo, conquistador town and birthplace of Pizarro; magnificent main square, mansions, castle and the grand church of S. Martín.

Day 3: Cabañas del Castillo to Navezuelas, total walk, c. 14 km. From the quartzite stumps and castle of Cabañas del Castillo, take a narrow path southwards, shoving at times through cistus bushes. A longish descent on good track follows, down into the first valley inside the mountain range. Climb again about 2 hours to a second ridge. Picnic here and descend by roughish path to little River Almonte below. Climb again half an hour to Navezuelas. Views are fine all day and we pass through holm oak and cork oak, olive and chestnut groves and last of all runner beans! Drive to the small mountain town of Guadalupe, hidden in the hills. First of two nights in Guadalupe.

Day 4: Navezuelas to Guadalupe, total walk c. 15 km. From the beautifully-sited village of Navazuelas, climb to the ridge high above and descend into the Viejas Valley. Views of rock tops opposite, with multiple peaks along the ridge and large screes running down to tender pasture on the valley floor. Pass the point where monks made bronze and kept an ice-well to chill their summer wine. Walk into Guadalupe.

Day 5: Guadalupe, Plasencia. Visit Guadalupe Monastery with splendid church, Mudéjar cloister and sacristy with a suite of paintings by Zurbarán. Drive to Plasencia. An afternoon stroll starts in the arcaded Plaza Mayor and includes the two Cathedrals, Renaissance and Gothic backing into one another *(restoration work in progress)*. Three nights in Plasencia.

Day 6: Plasencia to Riscos de Villavieja, total walk: c. 16 km. A gentle ascent along mediaeval tracks to mountain *dehesa* and grazing country, and up to the crags of Villavieja, complete with griffon vulture colony. Magnificent views down into the Jerte Valley and back to the Guadalupe mountains. Descent through oak woods ending for c. 2 km on concrete track.

Day 7: Carcaboso to Cáparra, total walk: c. 19 km. A calm, delightful walk on the historic *Via de la Plata,* the pilgrimage route which leads from Seville to Santiago de Compostela and which closely follows the Roman road through the wilds of Western Spain. Classic *dehesa* and cattle country, rich in bird life, with a few of the blackfoot, acorn-eating, ham-producing pigs. Picnic in a *cañada* – a drover's road – and end at the huge Roman arch of Cáparra.

Day 8: Tornavacas to Jarandilla. Two options today: either walk c. 13 km on a beautiful route to Garganta del Infierno to the curious and lovely rock formations scooped out by the river like enormous saucepans, or walk c. 28 km to Jarandilla following the route taken by the emperor Charles V to retirement in Yuste. This is a serious and challenging walk. Climb through cherry orchards and oak woods and then drop to a mediaeval bridge before climbing again through zig-zags to the pass at the top of the Sierra de Tormantos (1500m). Here there is a sudden and immense view of Extremadura below. From this half-way point there remains a prolonged descent, steep at times though never frightening, straight into the Castle of Jarandilla (our hotel) and the residence of Charles V while his living quarters at Yuste were completed. Overnight Jarandilla.

Day 9: Yuste Monastery. Our final visit is a moving insight into the last days of the man who once ruled most of Europe and Latin America. Drive to Madrid Airport. The flight arrives London Heathrow c. 5.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,650 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on Iberia flights (Airbus 321); travel by private coach with additional back-up vehicle; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 6 lunches (5 are packed lunches) and 6 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager, walking guides and additional baggage handler/driver. **Single supplement £255** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,520.**

Hotels: in Pago San Clemente (2 nights): a pretty and rustic farmhouse hotel set in orchards and vineyards with simple rooms grouped around courtyards; quirky, charming but not luxurious; outdoor pool; comparable to a 3-star. In Guadalupe (2 nights): 4-star Parador in the converted 15th-century pilgrim's hospital; traditional if austere decoration. In Plasencia (3 nights): 4-star Parador in a 15th-century convent with spacious and comfortable bedrooms and magnificent dining room. In Jarandilla (1 night): 4-star Parador and former residence of Charles V; rooms vary in outlook and some need updating. Dinners are largely in the hotels with a couple in restaurants.

How strenuous? This tour includes proper hill walking, some of it arduous, and fitness is essential; do not book this tour in order to get fit. Participants should be used to walking cross-country, uphill and down and be able to walk pleasurably for several hours at a time. The paths are often rough underfoot – rubble and stones require well-heeled walking boots and a good sense of balance. Even in the hills this part of Spain can be very warm in May and some walks offer little shade. Opting out of walks half-way is not always possible. Call us to discuss further.

Small group: between 12 and 17 participants.

After a drawing by Muirhead Bone published in 'Days in Old Spain' 1938.

GRANADA & CÓRDOBA

WITH MÁLAGA, ÚBEDA & BAEZA

19–26 March 2012 (MY 187)
8 days • £2,350
Lecturer: Dr Rose Walker

21–28 April 2012 (MY 219)
8 days • £2,350
Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

Ample time at the key sites of Moorish Spain: the Alhambra in Granada and the Mosque in Córdoba, with time also for the lesser-known.

Visits the Picasso Museum in Málaga and the small Renaissance towns of Úbeda and Baeza.

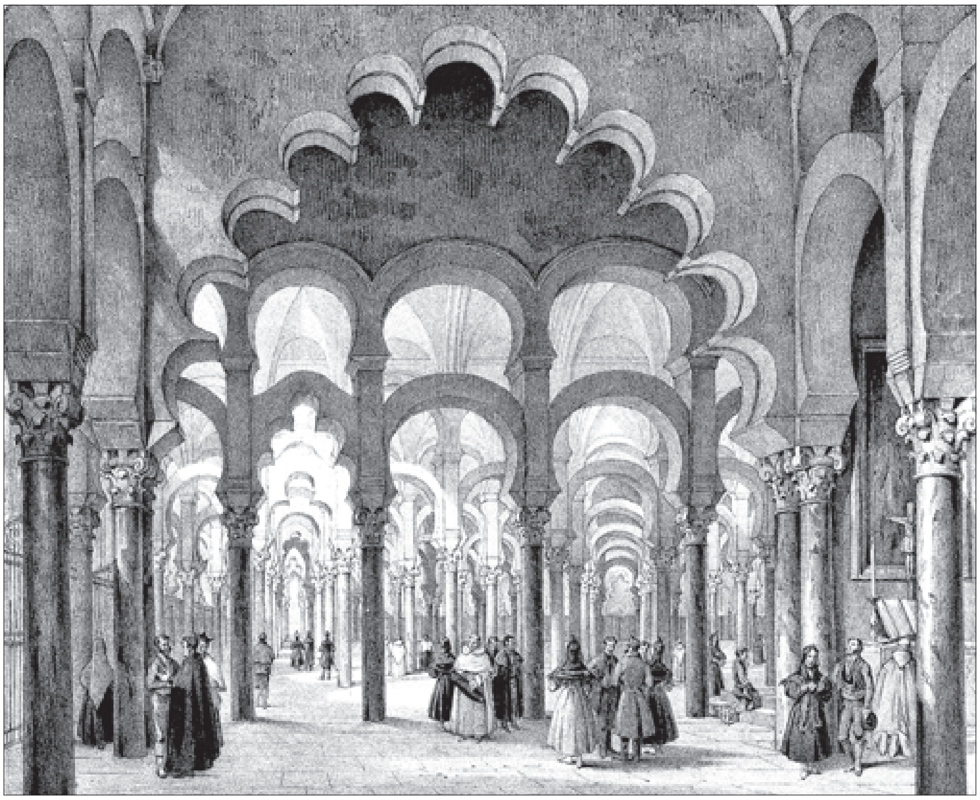
Southern Spain is a land of contrasts. Savage peaks soar over passes that are snow-bound in winter, plains are harsh and arid in summer but mellow in the winter and are well-watered by spring rivers.

The cities reveal the magnitude of past achievements through the greatness of the architecture and the brilliant elaboration of decoration. Andalucía was a bountiful Roman province, the scene of highly sophisticated Umayyad and Nasrid princedoms and a major province of the most powerful nation in sixteenth-century Europe. The artistic riches are immensely varied, though the unique distinguishing mark is the heritage from eight hundred years of rule by Muslims from North Africa and Arabia.

Córdoba became the capital of al-Andalus and the largest city in Europe, market for all the luxuries of East and West and scene of Europe's most splendid court until its fall to the Reconquistadors in 1236. The mosque, La Mezquita, was one of the largest anywhere, and arguably the most beautiful; Christian conversion in the sixteenth century created within it one of the largest cathedrals.

Granada was the last Islamic princedom in Spain, only falling to the Christians in 1492. The concatenation of palaces and gardens of the Alhambra, with its cascading domes and gilded decoration like frozen fireworks, is one of Spain's most enthralling sights.

Although millions of tourists pour through Málaga Airport every year en route to the Costa del Sol, very few set foot in the old town. The narrow streets, palm-lined squares and seafront promenades conserve a wealth of Moorish, Gothic, Baroque and late-nineteenth-century monuments. Birthplace and childhood home of Pablo Picasso, the city boasts a major collection of his works, rivalling those of Paris and Barcelona.



Córdoba, the Mezquita, steel engraving c. 1850.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 2.00pm (March, Monarch Airlines, seats with extra leg room) or 1.30pm (April, British Airways) from London Gatwick to Málaga. Overnight Málaga.

Day 2: Málaga. Begin at Picasso's birthplace, which houses a small collection of his belongings. The Picasso Museum is magnificent, both the 16th-century building and the collection, which places emphasis on his earlier works. There is time also to see the Alcazaba, a predominantly 11th-century Moorish construction with fine views from its terraces. In the afternoon drive north to Granada. First of three nights in Granada.

Day 3: Granada. On a hilltop site is the Palace of the Alhambra, the greatest expression of Moorish art in Spain, with exquisite decoration and a succession of intimate courtyards. Adjacent are the 16th-century Palace of Charles V and the Generalife, summer palace of the sultans, with gardens and fountains. In the late afternoon visit the Royal Chapel which has a fine collection of Flemish, Spanish and Italian paintings.

Day 4: Granada. Morning walk through the Albayzín, the oldest quarter in town, including El Bañuelo (Arab baths), the Archaeological Museum *(currently closed for renovation)* and a climb up to San Nicolás from where there are fine views of the Alhambra. In the afternoon drive to the Carthusian Monastery, extravagantly and joyously Baroque.

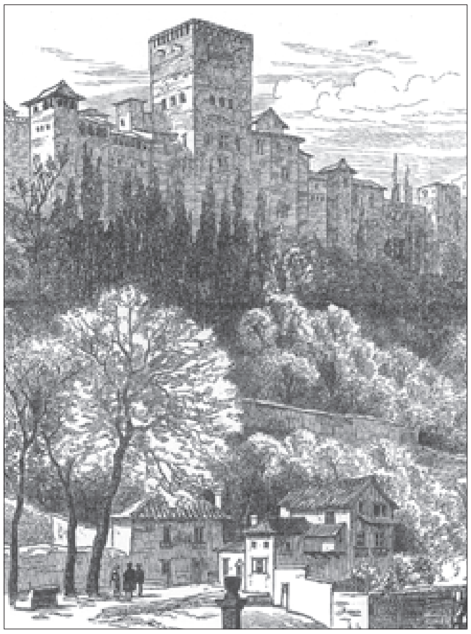
Day 5: Baeza, Úbeda. Drive to Baeza, once a prosperous and important town and now a provincial backwater of quiet charm set among olive groves stretching to the horizon with a 16th-century cathedral and many grand houses of an alluring light-coloured stone. In Úbeda walk to the handsome Plaza Vázquez de Molina, flanked by elegant palaces including Casa de las Cadenas and the present day parador. The church of El Salvador was designed by Diego de Siloé in 1536. Continue to Córdoba for the first of three nights.

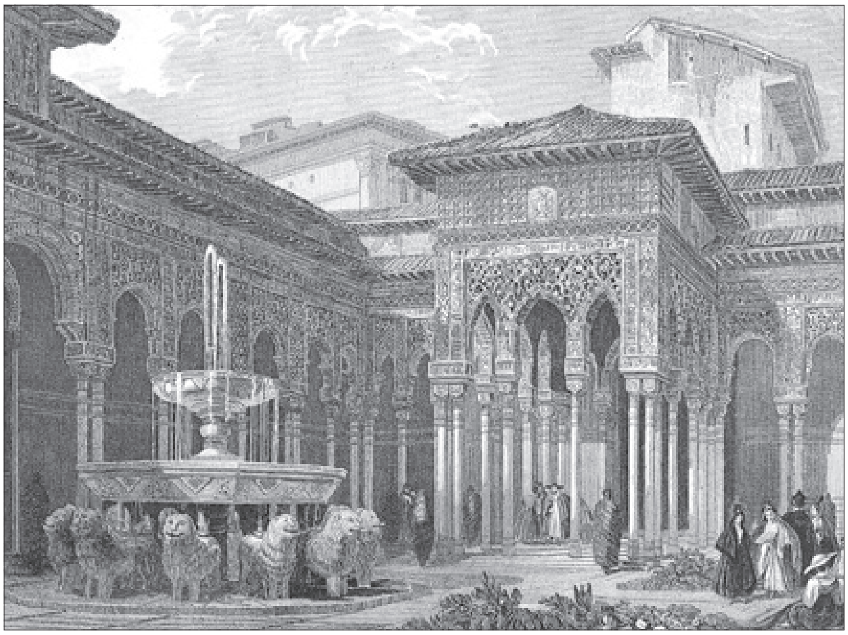
Day 6: Córdoba. From the middle of the 8th century Córdoba was the capital of Islamic Spain and became the richest city in Europe until its capitulation to the Reconquistadors in 1236. Visit the Alcázar, mediaeval with earlier architectural remains and the narrow streets of the old Jewish quarter including the 14th-century synagogue. The Fine Arts Museum, with Plateresque façade, houses paintings by the best Spanish masters. La Mezquita (mosque) is one of the most magnificent of Muslim shrines, and contains within it the 16th-century Christian cathedral.

Day 7: Córdoba. Morning visit to the

ANDALUCÍA

SPAIN'S SOUTHERN PROVINCE





Far left: Granada, Alhambra walls, wood engraving c. 1890; near left: Alhambra, Court of the Lions, engraving c. 1860.

Archaeological Museum, housed in a Renaissance mansion, with a fine collection of Roman and Arab pieces. Drive out to the excavations of Medina Azahara, a 10th-century palace complex of considerable luxury. Free afternoon in Córdoba.

Day 8. Early start for Málaga. The flight arrives at London Gatwick at c. 1.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,350 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) with Monarch and British Airways (March) or British Airways (April) (Airbus 300 and 321); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and a local guide. **Single supplement £410** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,200.**

Hotels: in Málaga (1 night): a functional and comfortable 4-star hotel in the centre. In Granada (3 nights): a 5-star hotel in a converted convent, close to the Royal Chapel; rooms are comfortable and contemporary; more comparable to a 4-star. In Córdoba (3 nights): 4-star hotel in a converted 18th-century mansion; a short walk from the mosque.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking, some of it uphill and some over uneven ground. Average distance by coach per day: 44 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

17–27 October 2011 (MY 995)
This tour is currently full.

15–25 October 2012 (MZ 403)
11 days • £3,140
Lecturer: Adam Hopkins

Three nights in each of the major cities: Granada, Córdoba and Seville.

Begin in Málaga with the Picasso Museum, and also visit the lesser-known towns of Baeza, Úbeda and Ecija.

Varied itinerary covering the great Moorish sites, mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque architecture, fine art collections and gardens.

Andalucía is Spain's most fascinating and varied region. Varied geographically: stretching southwards from the Sierra Morena to the Mediterranean, it encompasses the permanent snow of the Sierra Nevada as well as the sun-scorched interior.

And varied culturally: here it is possible to see great art and architecture of both Islamic and Christian traditions side by side – even, at Córdoba, one within the other. For Spain is unique in Western Europe in having been conquered by an Islamic power. The Moors first crossed from Africa in AD 711, and in the south of the country they stayed for nearly eight centuries. The Moorish civilization of the cities of Andalucía was one of the most sophisticated of the Middle Ages.

There are also tantalizing glimpses of the preceding Visigothic kingdom, and remains of the still earlier Roman occupation – the province of Baetica was one of the most highly favoured in the Roman Empire. Later, both Jews and gypsies made their influence felt, but overwhelmingly the dominant contribution to man-made Andalucian heritage has been created by and for unwavering adherents to Catholicism. The Christian religion does not get much more intense than in southern Spain, and its artistic manifestations rarely more spiritually charged.

The unification of Spain which was ensured by the marriage in 1469 of the 'Catholic Kings', Ferdinand and Isabella, ushered in the period when Spain became the dominant power in Europe. This also coincided with the discovery of the Americas. The cities of the south, particularly Seville, were the immediate beneficiaries of the subsequent colonisation and inflow of huge quantities of bullion and of boundless opportunities for trade and wealth creation.

The result was a boom in building and a cultural renaissance, a Golden Age which lasted into the eighteenth century, long after the economy had cooled and real Spanish power had waned. The poverty and torpor of subsequent centuries allowed much of the beauty of the glory days to survive to the present time, when a revival of prosperity has enabled extensive restoration and proper care of the immense artistic patrimony.

Itinerary in 2012

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.30pm from London Gatwick to Málaga. Overnight Málaga.

Days 2–7. See the itinerary for 'Granada & Córdoba' on the previous page.

Day 8: Ecija, Seville. The many church towers of Ecija are visible from afar across the surrounding plain. Of the numerous Baroque mansions see the Palacio de Peñaflor and Palacio del Marqués de Benameji, and visit the Gothic-Múdejar church of Santiago. Drive to Seville and our hotel in the Barrio de Santa Cruz, a maze of whitewashed alleys and flower-filled patios. Walk to the Casa de Pilatos, the best of the Mudéjar style palaces, with patios and *azulejos*. First of three nights in Seville.

Day 9: Seville. Walk to the church and hospital of the Caridad, Seville's most striking 17th-century building, with paintings by Murillo and Valdés Leal. The cathedral is one of the largest Gothic churches anywhere ('Let us build a cathedral so immense that everyone... will take us for madmen'). The Capilla Mayor, treasury and sanctuary are of particular interest. Free afternoon.

Day 10: Seville. The Alcázar, the fortified royal palace, is one of Spain's greatest buildings; built by Moorish architects for Castilian kings, it consists of a sequence of apartments and magnificent reception rooms around courtyards and gardens. Further exploration of the Barrio de Santa Cruz. Afternoon at the Fine Arts Museum, the best in Spain after the Prado.

Day 11. Drive back to Málaga, via the pretty town of Antequera, for the evening flight to London Gatwick arriving c. 7.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,140 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Boeing 737); private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 7 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, tour manager and guides. **Single supplement £510** (double room for single use). **Price without flights £3,000.**

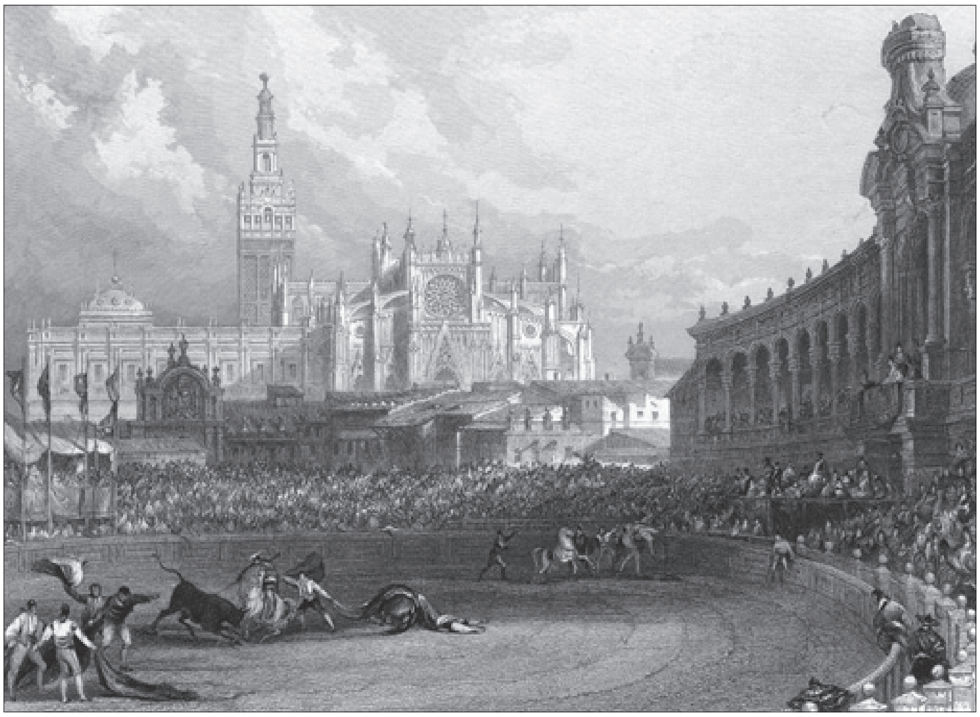
Hotels: Málaga (1 night): a functional 4-star in the centre. Granada (3 nights): a 5-star in a former convent; rooms are comfortable and contemporary; more comparable to a 4-star. Córdoba (3 nights): a 4-star in an 18th-century mansion, a short walk from the mosque. Seville (3 nights): a charming 4-star hotel in the Barrio Sta Cruz created from several contiguous buildings connected by open-air patios; rooms vary in size and outlook. Included meals are in carefully selected restaurants.

How strenuous? A lengthy tour with four hotels, a lot of walking on uneven ground and uphill, and a fair amount of coach travel. You need to be fit. Average distance by coach per day: 33 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

GASTRONOMIC ANDALUCÍA

FOOD, WINE, ART & ARCHITECTURE



Seville, steel engraving 1846.

23–30 March 2012 (MY 197)
8 days • £2,890
Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

Journey south from Las Pedroñeras in La Mancha in a sweeping curve through Andalucía: Ubeda, Baeza, Córdoba, Seville, Jerez, Cádiz, Aracena.

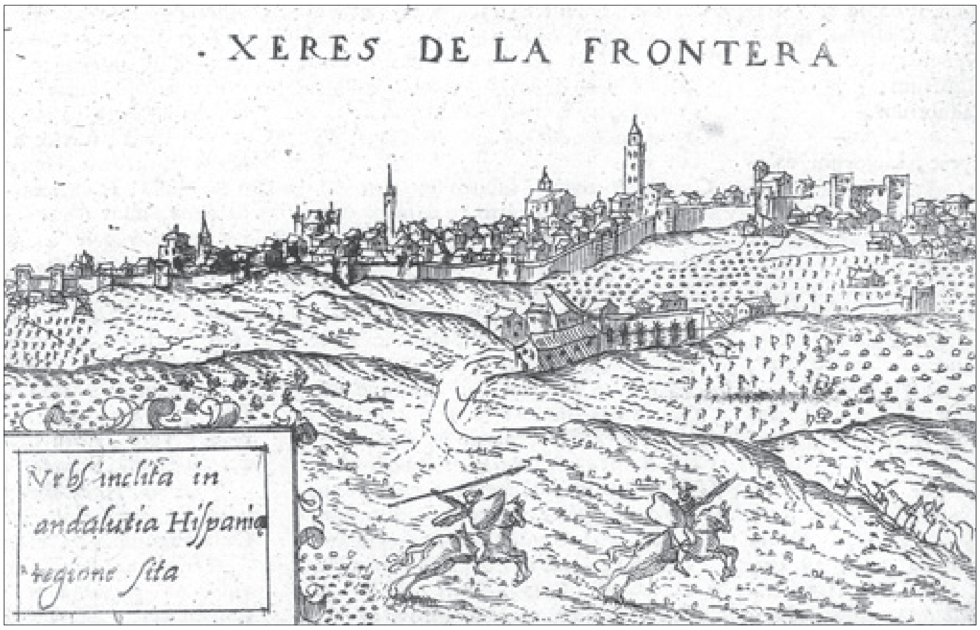
Surveys the history of the region with its cuisine: Roman, Jewish, Moorish, Christian; from the simplest cooking to the elaborate and contemporary.

Some of Spain's greatest monuments are here including the mosque at Córdoba and Seville Cathedral, but also good museums, small towns and spectacular countryside.

'Al-Andalus' (the Andalucía of the Moors) are words which immediately evoke fantasies of displays of sweetmeats, saffron stained rice and jewels of livid red pomegranate. Exotic flavour combinations are countered by the simplicity of perfectly prepared fish; flaking, moist and ivory white. Sophisticated techniques are often tempered by the deeply felt philosophy that, yes, less can be more.

Gastronomic Andalucía is a true feast of the senses: earthy smells are countered by elusive and piquant tastes; sherries, montillas and punchy red 'caldos' of La Mancha wine stand up perfectly to the pickled *escabeches* of game, the deep-flavoured fish soups, and the marriage of almonds, lemon-steeped olives and air-dried tenderloin of albacore tuna. The backdrop of Gastronomic Andalucía is no less exotic: Ubeda and Baeza, the twin cities of Spain's Renaissance, are surrounded by stands of olive trees that lead the eye out to the horizon and the sierras beyond. The mosque in Córdoba, at the very heart of the Caliphate, makes a complete nonsense of the received wisdom about the so-called Dark Ages. Seville's *barrio* of the Santa Cruz still offers up phantom vistas of an extraordinary cosmopolitan past.

Andalucía, it must be remembered, has a large variety of climates. In the mountains above Seville the hams of the wild Iberian pig dry perfectly into a product that is second to none. Sea breezes around Sanlucar signal the flavour of salt on the tongue. South to Baeza, off the tourist track, we enter the land of olives, and a tasting at the family run Castillo de Canena, where Spain's Business Woman of the Year, Rosa Vañó, inducts us into the arcane wonders of olive oil tasting, and where, close by, the unpretentious Casa Juanito, the Spanish gourmet's choice of 'true' authenticity has for decades put it in the Top Ten of restaurants in Spain. Córdoba, of course, needs no advertising but a fourteenth-century convent restaurant on the edge of the gypsy quarter is just one way of retiring from the Caliphate's wealthy past and the powerful midday sun. Perfectly fried aubergines are a foil for the oxtail, fillets of fish with herbs and oil are trapped in a flash, in a film of the lightest batter and laid out on a bed of the speciality, fried lettuce. Oaky Montilla wine is taken standing.



Jerez de la Frontera, engraving 1713.

Seville, Jerez, Cádiz are worlds on their own. Sherry houses are famous for producing unique tastes. Less known are the *almenacistas,* passionate amateurs, whose houses, basements, shops, and even living rooms are turned over to storing and nursing their barrels. Cádiz's legendary restaurant El Faro takes fish frying to a new level with wafer thin pancakes of miniature shrimp and is the best place in Spain to eat line caught bass baked in a salt crust. The tour ends in Seville with Michelin-starred and Basque chef, Martin Berasategui's take on Andalucian cuisine.

Itinerary

Day 1: London to La Mancha. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow to Madrid. Drive south into La Mancha to the small walled town of Belmonte. Settle into the hotel before leaving for dinner in nearby Las Pedroñeras. Here Michelin-starred chef Manuel de la Osa marries bohemian bonhomie with a passion for garlic. Overnight in Belmonte.

Day 2: La Mancha to Andalucía. In Belmonte visit the Gothic church of San Bartolomé and the superbly sited 15th-century castle. In the surrounding countryside visit the vineyards of Pesquera, of Ribera de Duero fame, for a tasting and lunch. Drive through the magnificent pass of Desfiladero de Despeñaperros and enter Andalucía. The handsome town of Ubeda has with streets and squares lined with palaces, one of these our hotel. First of two nights in Ubeda.

Day 3: Ubeda, Baeza. The twin towns of Ubeda and Baeza thrived in the 16th-century and are richly endowed with Renaissance monuments. Spend time in both with lunch in Baeza at Casa Juanito. The arab Castle of Canena is deep in olive-grove country of the Guadalquivir valley and home to the Vañó family, famed producers; tasting and visit here. Overnight Ubeda.

Day 4: Córdoba, Seville. Drive west to Córdoba and focus on La Mezquita, one of the largest and most beautiful mosques in the world, and within it the 16th-century cathedral. Walk through the old Jewish quarter, with 14th-century synagogue, to a chilled aperitif and a Moorish lunch. Continue to Seville for an evening tapas walk through the flower-filled Barrio de Santa Cruz. First of four nights in Seville.

Day 5: Seville. Begin at the Alcázar, one of Spain's greatest buildings, built by Moorish architects for Spanish kings, with its courtyards, gardens and magnificent tapestries. The 15th-century cathedral is one of the largest Gothic churches anywhere, with a Late Gothic retable and paintings by Murillo, Zurbarán and Goya. Lunch is in a neighbourhood restaurant with Michelin-starred contemporary Andalucian cuisine. In the early evening visit to the Fine Arts Museum, the finest collection in Spain after the Prado. Overnight in Seville.

Day 6: Jerez de la Frontera, Cádiz. Drive south to Jerez, at the heart of sherry production. Special arrangements include a tasting at the Lustau bodega and Bodegas Tradición with its own art collection. Continue to the historic port of Cádiz; laid-back and unspoilt, and with a renowned fish restaurant. There is time after lunch to visit the city museum with a significant archaeological collection. Overnight in Seville.

Day 7: Sierra de Aracena, Sanlucar la Mayor. Drive north to the Sierra de Aracenca, the low mountains which form the border with Extremadura. Here we taste the exquisite *jamón ibérico*. There is an optional walk in the foothills along farm tracks lined with oak, chestnut and olive trees and livestock. Alternatively remain in the town of Aracena. The evening is spent at Martin Berasategui's Michelin-starred restaurant, Santo. Overnight in Seville.

Day 8: Seville. Free morning in Seville; we suggest visiting the Casa de Pilatos, the best of the Mudéjar-style palaces, or the church and hospital of the Caridad, with paintings by Murillo and Valdés Leal. Drive to Seville airport for the flight to London, arriving c. 4.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,890 (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled flights with British Airways and Vueling (aircraft: A319 jet); private coach travel throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 6 lunches (including 2 'tasting' lunches) and 4 dinners (including a tapas walk) with wine, water and coffee; all other tastings; all admission to museums and sites; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £220** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £2,680.**

Hotels: in Belmonte (1 night): a rustic hotel in a 16th-century house in the old town; simple but charming. In Ubeda (2 nights): a 4-star Parador in a Renaissance palace on the most handsome square in town; comfortable rooms, traditionally furnished. In Seville (4 nights): a pretty hotel in the Barrio Sta Cruz created from several contiguous palaces connected by open-air patios; rooms vary in size and outlook, locally rated as 4-star.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking over uneven ground and up and down hill (as well as an optional country walk). Some days involve a lot of driving. Average distance by coach per day: 101 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

SEMANA SANTA IN SPAIN

HOLY WEEK IN SMALL TOWNS OF THE SOUTH

2–9 April 2012 (MY 201)
8 days • £2,020
Lecturer: Adam Hopkins

A week of drama, devotion, crowds and fun.

Based in two small towns: Carmona in Andalucía and Zafra in Extremadura.

Spends a day in Seville to see processions in this most renowned of Easter cities.

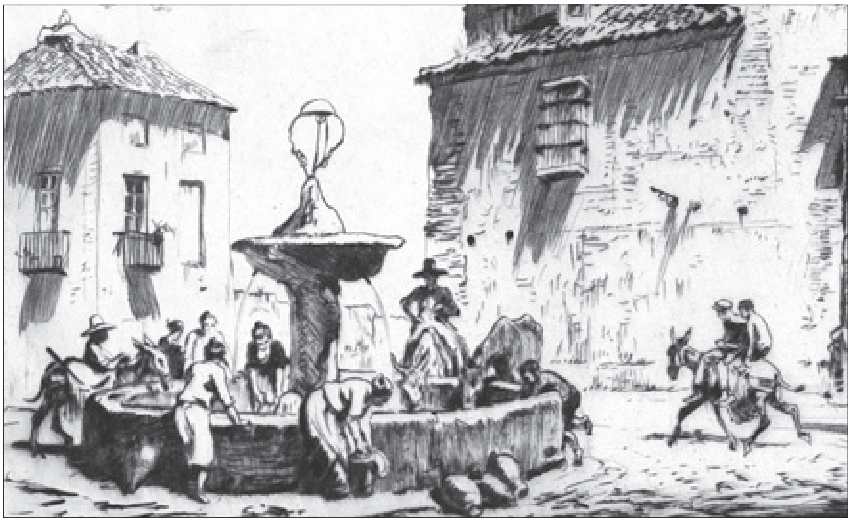
Carnival in Rio, royal progresses in London, St Patrick's Day in New York: the world is not short of good street theatre. But Holy Week in Spain is equal to any - week-long, full of strange sights and wonders, and nationwide, embracing every town and village in the country. In a land where fewer than a quarter still go to church, the winding street processions, the candle-lit floats with holy figures, the extraordinary costumes of the barefoot penitents, the very extravagances of devotion, seem to contain something beyond purely Christian mystery. Everybody takes part, whatever their persuasion. This is a fiesta without denominations.

Sometimes a singer will appear on a corner balcony and, when the procession pauses beneath, will launch a *saeta* in ancient ululations that raise the hair on the back of the neck. Carrying the floats is a highly skilled affair demanding many weeks of practice by teams of up to sixty. Sometimes you see the porters pop out from beneath the heavy folds of textile that hide the lower parts of the float, to enjoy a smoke or a glass of beer while deputy porters pop in. It is a time for flowers, gorgeous cloths, for gleaming ecclesiastical silver work. Statues ranging from near-pop to the highest form of artistic expression are paraded through the streets in absolute confidence they will come to no harm.

And then, in the deeps of Thursday night, there comes the sorrowful climax as Christ is carried to his doom, often with spectacular expressions of grief.

Fast on the heels of which, it's party time. Fervour gives way to bank holiday spirit and Sunday brings another climax: meat, drink and the pleasures of the countryside.

This tour is a chance to participate in the popular life of Spain, with crowds and simple comradeship, tapas, wine or coffee in very busy bars. We have chosen the south-west, from ancient Carmona and Seville with its feverish processions to the towered Templar town of Jerez de los Caballeros, well known in a humbler way for its delightfully striking processions. The plan is to get an overview of Spain in Holy Week – with lunches out, countryside and some wonderful towns and villages to visit just for the fun of it.



Detail of an etching by Sir Lionel Lindsay 1929 (the town is Antequera – which we do not visit).

Itinerary

Day 1: Carmona. Fly at c. 5.30pm from London Heathrow to Seville and drive to Carmona (arriving at the hotel c. 10.30pm). This small town runs from a castle on its summit down to one of Spain's most splendid fortified gates. Three nights in Carmona.

Day 2: Carmona. Visit the Roman necropolis, Moorish and Christian Alcázar, built on Roman foundations, town hall with Roman mosaics and the church of Sta Maria, its courtyard that of the mosque it replaced. In the evening, the first of our processions, that of the Brotherhood of the Holy Expiration of Christ Our Lord and All-Holy Mary of the Sorrows, with most of the town's children taking part.

Day 3: Seville. All-day trip to Andalucía's capital and centre of Spain's Holy Week. The Fine Arts Museum, in a tile-rich convent, has some of the finest works of Zurbarán. See something of the city's processions. There may be time for the cathedral, one of the largest Gothic churches anywhere. Return early evening to Carmona.

Day 4: Llerena, Zafra. Drive across the Sierra Morena into Extremadura, stopping at Llerena. The delightful town of Zafra, has two peculiar and pleasing arcaded squares, one big, one small. In the evening visit Jerez de los Caballeros for the ultra-theatrical Thursday night processions, famed in this part of Spain. First of four nights in Zafra.

Day 5: Zafra. Late morning walk to the 14th-cent. Collegiate Church of Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria, with a fine altarpiece by Zurbarán. Drive into the countryside for a rustic lunch. Free afternoon in Zafra.

Day 6: Olivenza, La Albuera. Olivenza is one of the loveliest towns of this part of Spain; it was Portuguese until border readjustments following the War of the Oranges in 1801 and it bears the florid imprint of Manuelline Gothic. Good local museum and fine castle. La Albuera was scene of the most ferocious and sanguinary battle of the Peninsular War.

Day 7: Sierra de Aracena. Trip to the Sierra de Aracena, lovely low mountains rich in chestnuts and running water, dividing Extremadura from Andalucía. A chance to walk: vigorous cross-country for the habituated, easy country walk for others, and plenty of cafés in Aracena for refuseniks. Easter lunch at a private finca.

Day 8: Zafra to Seville. Drive to Seville and fly to Heathrow, arriving c. 4.45pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,020 (deposit £200). This includes: air travel on scheduled Vueling flights (Airbus 320); travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 4 dinners (including 1 light one) with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for drivers, waiters, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £250** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without flights £1,870.**

Hotels: in Carmona (3 nights): functional 4-star hotel in the historic centre, comfortable but simple. In Zafra (4 nights): 4-star hotel in a converted 19th-cent. 'casa-palacio'. All 15 rooms have ensuite facilities but vary in size and outlook; restaurant and library.

How strenuous? There is a lot of walking over uneven ground and through narrow, crowded streets. Expect some late nights. Average distance by coach per day: 70 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

BRITISH ACTIONS IN THE STRAITS

HISTORY & WALKING IN GIBRALTAR & ANDALUCÍA

17–24 March 2012 (MY 185)
8 days • £2,560
Lecturer: Adam Hopkins

A new tour for 2012.

1704–1812: a fascinating and little-known period of history.

The siege of Gibraltar, the battle of Trafalgar, the Battle of Barrosa, the Siege of Tarifa, the struggle for Cádiz and the 1812 Spanish Constitution.

Includes three country walks through spectacular mountain and coastal scenery.

Small group: maximum of 17 participants.

From the day Admiral Rooke took Gibraltar in 1704 the Spanish, at times with help from the French, were determined to take it back. From 24th June 1779 the fortress was besieged for nearly four years by a combined French and Spanish naval and military force. With huge courage and determination the British, under General George Augustus Eliott, resisted and eventually broke the siege. This tour explores this fascinating and little known story by visiting the main sites and scenes in Gibraltar including the tunnels and battery positions on the Rock. By looking out over Algeciras Bay one sees where Rear-Admiral James Saumarez fought the French in two successive actions in 1801, the second one a perfectly extraordinary affair.

On 21 October 1805 just off the Cabo de Trafalgar the combined fleet of 33 French and Spanish ships of the line was decisively defeated by the 27 of the British Fleet commanded by Vice-Admiral Lord Nelson. The Combined Fleet set sail from Cádiz and here the surviving ships returned in tatters, their defeat exacerbated by the great storm.

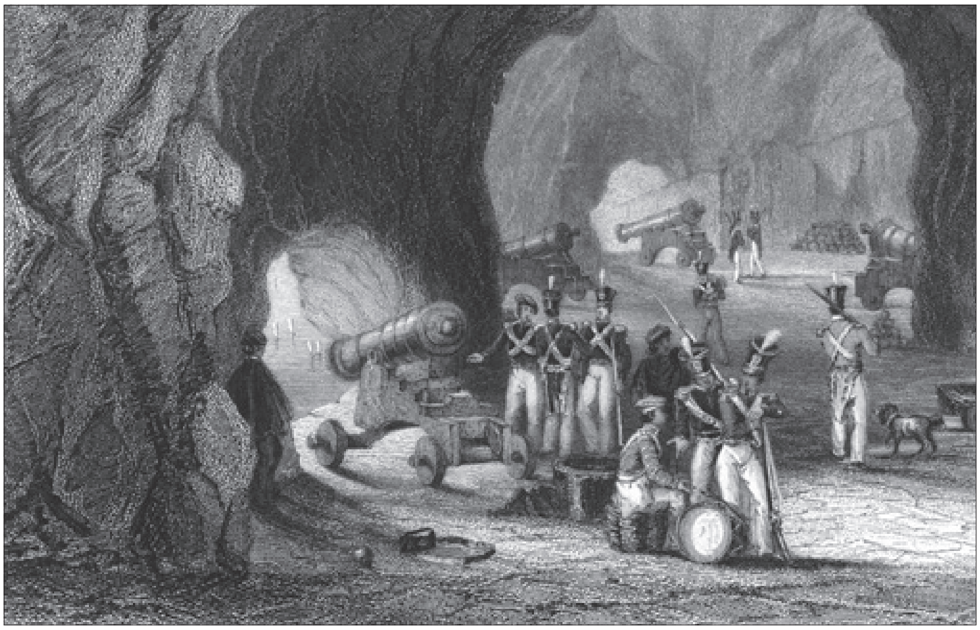
From 1810, Cádiz was under siege by the French: a siege which formed the background for much else.

The Battle of La Barrosa 1811 is a little known Peninsular War struggle that took place in the dunes not far from Cádiz when a single British division defeated two French divisions under Marshall Victor and captured a regimental eagle.

Tarifa, beloved of wind-surfers and also in the Cádiz ambit, was successfully held by an Anglo-Spanish force in a fast moving siege over New Year 1811/1812.

In 1812 the Spanish government in exile in Cádiz declared a radical constitution that set the scene for an ideological struggle leading right up into the 20th century and ultimately to the tragic Civil War of 1936–1939. In 2012 Cádiz will celebrate the bicentenary of this constitution, promising some interesting exhibitions on the period.

This tour is designed, planned and led by Hugh Arbuthnott and his family. Three of seven nights are spent in their beautiful and comfortable *finca* at Almuña, or at Los Cristales, a private house nearby, in the hills of Southern Andalucía. The atmosphere is welcoming and arriving there might feel as if you have joined a private country house party among old friends. From both houses there are glorious views stretching to both the Mediterranean and the Straits, the scene of so many desperate military actions. Hugh's wife Jane was for eight years a professional cook in England and is responsible for the meals in Almuña.



The casements on Gibraltar, steel engraving 1853 from 'Taylor's Geography, The World as it is' Vol. I.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 8.00am from London Heathrow to Gibraltar. Transfer to Almuña for the first of three nights.

Day 2. Almuña, Gaucín. First, a lecture by Adam at Almuña on the taking of Gibraltar in 1704. Local historian, Salvador Martín, talks in the town hall of nearby Gaucín on the role of the town in the Peninsular War *(subject to confirmation)*. Walk back through lovely countryside to Almuña (c. 6 km). Evening lecture on the Great Siege of Gibraltar.

Day 3: Gibraltar. Walk the bastions and visit the museum. From the peak of the rock view the site of the Battle of Algeciras Bay (1801) and Rosia Bay, an important site in Battle of Trafalgar (1805). Explore the Great Siege tunnel, fortifications of the Northern Defences and the Trafalgar cemetery.

Day 4: Tarifa. Morning lecture on the period from the Great Siege to the end of the Peninsular War in 1813. Drive to Algeciras and from here walk the coastal path to Tarifa, following in the steps of General Graham on his way to join the combined force that eventually fought at Barrosa (c. 13 km). It was here from 1811 to 1812 that the French failed to dislodge the British garrison under British Colonel Skerrett and the more resolute Spanish General Copons. Walk the largely intact city walls and see the fortress constructed in 960 by Caliph Abd al-Raham III and immortalised by the feats of Perez de Guzman in the 14th century. Continue to Cádiz where three nights are spent.

Day 5: La Barrosa, Jerez de la Frontera. Drive to the site of the Battle of Barrosa (1811) to reconstruct the days of conflict, and on to the spot where the Spanish General Zayas assembled his Bridge of Boats. Lunch is at the Fisherman's confederation at Sancti Petri. The afternoon is spent in Jerez de la Frontera and the home of Beltran Domecq to view the private museum founded by his grandfather and dedicated to the Battle of Barrosa. Evening lecture on the Battle of Trafalgar.

Day 6: Cádiz. Walk through the grid of streets in old Cádiz. From the Torre Tavira survey Cádiz bay, scene of so many shipwrecks of the great storm after Trafalgar. Look in the Oratorio de San Felipe Neri where the 1812 constitution was drawn up, and the Iglesia del Carmen where the naval officers of Spain and France attended mass the night before Trafalgar. The afternoon is free. Suggestions include the Cádiz museum, with paintings by Zurbarán and Murillo, and a fine archaeological section. Also the former women's hospital, containing El Greco's *St Francis of Assisi* and the 18th-century Oratorio de la Santa Cueva with Goya frescoes.

Day 7: Vejer de la Frontera, Cape Trafalgar. From Vejer de la Frontera walk c. 8 km through umbrella pine forests to the cliff edge of Cape Trafalgar. With the aid of a large board and model ships, you re-enact the battle and the aftermath. Overnight Tarifa.

Day 8. Drive to Gibraltar for a flight to London Heathrow arriving c. 2.30pm.

Practicalities

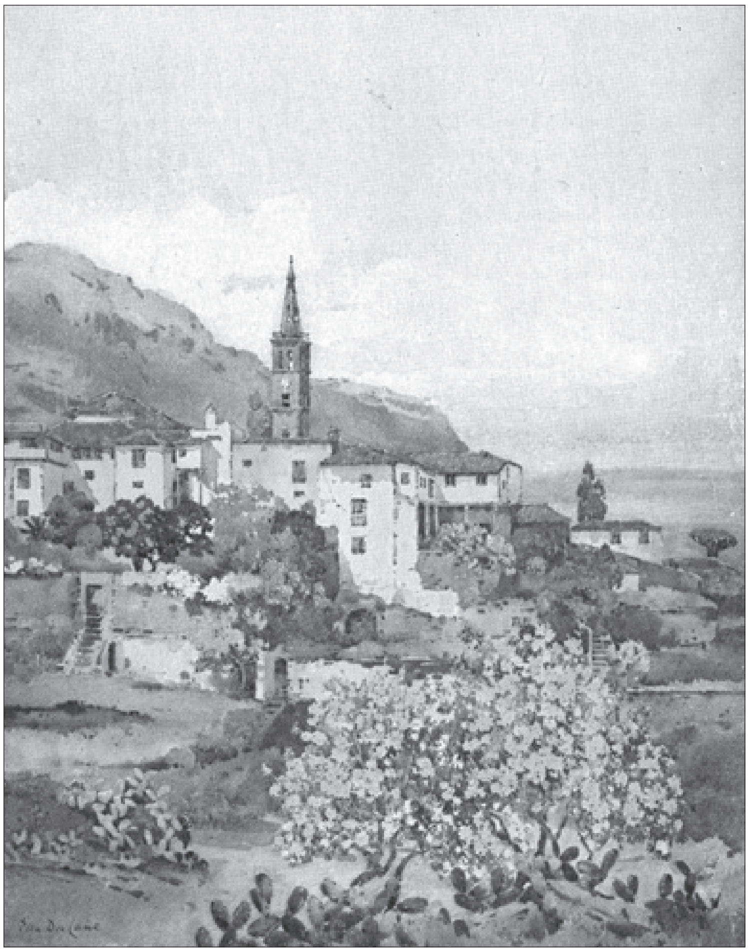
Price: £2,560 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus A319 jet); travel by Fiat van or Discovery 4x4; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 6 lunches (including 1 picnic lunch) and 6 dinners, with wine, water and coffee; all additional drinks at Almuña; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer, local guides where required and tour manager. **Single supplement £260** (double room for single occupancy). **If staying at the Los Cristales house in Almuña, there is no single supplement at all for the whole tour. Price without flights £2,360.**

Accommodation: in Almuña (3 nights): the Finca de Almuña is the Arbuthnott family home. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming and the food is excellent. Rooms are comfortable but vary in size. All dinners are served here. Los Cristales house (single rooms only) is less than 5 minutes walk from the Finca de Almuña. Accommodation here is more rustic; floors are tiled. In Cádiz (3 nights): a 4-star hotel in converted palace, located in a narrow street in the historic centre. Rooms have little natural light but are modern and well appointed. In Tarifa (1 night): a three star hotel on the beach. Rooms are simple but comfortable. There is a good restaurant.

How strenuous? An average level of fitness is necessary, particularly for the country walks, although terrain is mostly flat and it is possible to opt out. There are some long drives along winding country roads. Average distance by coach per day: 55 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 17 participants.

Walking in the Canary Islands



After a painting by Ella du Cane, from 'The Canary Islands' 1911.

2–10 March 2012 (MY 174)
9 days • £2,650
Leaders: Adam Hopkins & Gaby Macphedran

Spectacular landscapes offer five varied and beautiful walks for fit and frequent walkers.

Includes a walk in the national park around Spain's highest mountain, Mount Teide, on Tenerife.

La Gomera's ravines and laurisilva forests are walkers' territory, untouched by beach tourism.

Visits with good historical content are arranged around the walks.

The Canary Islands, spectacularly volcanic in their Atlantic home off the bulge of Africa, offer the nearest winter sun to northern Europe and have been receiving British visitors since the eighteenth century. Though the coasts of the main islands are now, of course, highly developed, the high interior and far-flung peninsulas of Tenerife provide walkers with astonishing views, and springtime brings a profusion of endemic flowers. The smaller islands to the west, La Gomera in our case, but also super-steep El Hierro and green La Palma, remain, to a surprising extent, havens of peace and a rich territory for walkers.

Tenerife possesses Spain's highest mountain. The great cone of Mount Teide, at just under 12,200 feet, is surrounded by a broad and shallow crater, full of geological interest and plants with curious adaptations. It forms the National Park of Las Cañadas and is the site of our first day's walking. The island also has high, wild, old and massively eroded peninsulas north-east and north-west. We walk both of these.

La Gomera's mixture of inspirational ravine country and gentler laurisilva cloudforests - survivors of the vegetation that covered the Mediterranean basin before the Ice Age and now a habitat unique to the Canarian uplands - has put this tiny island high on the list of walkers' preferred destinations. Here we walk in ravine country outside the forest limits and through the heart of the forest – which comprises another National Park, La Garajonay. Botanists and gardeners are likely to find this day, and plant life generally in the Canaries, enthralling.

But there is more than landscape. The earliest inhabitants of the Canary Islands were Stone Age people. The Greeks and Romans knew of the Canary Islands and called them the Fortunate Islands or Islands of the Blessed. Mediaeval sailors from Europe raided them for slaves. The Spanish finally took the islands in the late fifteenth century. Columbus set sail from La Gomera on his first voyage to the Americas and the Canaries soon became a springboard for America-bound Spanish shipping. Later the port of Las Palmas on Gran Canaria became one of the great coaling stations for Atlantic shipping. But it is probably Columbus and his Gomeran associations which command the profoundest interest.

Memorials of the early inhabitants are plentiful and moving. Some Spanish colonial architecture survives and there is some dashing modern architecture, product of Canarian determination to enter the cultural mainstream. On Tenerife, the Santiago Calatrava concert hall in the capital, Santa Cruz, is quite outstanding. And both Tenerife and La Gomera have contributions from that fine Canarian painter, architect and designer of spaces, César Manrique.

Itinerary

Day 1: London to Tenerife. Fly at c. 11.10am from London Heathrow to Madrid and on to Tenerife, arriving c. 6.30pm. There is a short drive to the hotel in Puerto de la Cruz, arriving in time for dinner. First of four nights in Tenerife.

Day 2: walk, Mount Teide & Las Cañadas. All walks in the Canaries begin with a drive, generally a mountain ascent. Today, we drive up and up into the great crater round Mt Teide (altitude: 2400m). We walk inside the crater, the national park of Las Cañadas. The route is gentle, with modest ascents, but high and may be cool in the morning (c. 16 km). Fascinating vegetation. Our objective is La Fortaleza, the Fortress, part of the old rock circle of Las Cañadas. Overnight Tenerife.

Day 3: walk, Teno Peninsula. Drive to north-west corner of the island, to the dramatically elevated Teno massif. Beginning with a brisk ascent there are views of the islands of La Gomera and La Palma, soon descending into tree-heather woods. Next we descend again to skirt the top of huge cliffs. Climb gently to the village of Teno Alto and walk out through a series of small valleys (c. 14 km). Overnight Tenerife.

Day 4: walk, Anaga Peninsula. Drive to the high and ancient Anaga peninsula in the north-east. Views en route of Gran Canaria and our first sight of laurisilva forest. Once walking, we climb steeply at first from a rustic hamlet to the crest of a ridge. Next we descend towards a lighthouse far below, then traverse the slopes at a fair height. The mountainside is rich in birdsong and endemic Anaga plant life, with waves breaking in white lacework on black volcanic rock below (c. 14 km). Overnight Tenerife.

Day 5: Santa Cruz de Tenerife, La Gomera. Spend the morning in Santa Cruz visiting the modern Museum of Nature and Man, dealing with the formation of the volcanic landscape and the aboriginal Stone-Age people overwhelmed by European conquerors in the 15th century. Also the fine Canarian church of Nra Sra de la Concepción and views of the famous Santiago Calatrava concert hall. Fly to La Gomera (c. 25 minutes) and drive to the Parador, dramatically placed on a cliff-top above the minuscule capital, San Sebastián. First of four nights in La Gomera.

Day 6: walk, La Gomera. Our first walk on La Gomera takes us through the 'Green Ravine' (c. 7 km). We start at the Forestry house of Igualero, following trails through an agricultural area and passing by the settlement of Los Manantiales (The Springs) in fine countryside to reach Chipude, the next village. From here we walk the one-time highway (Camino Real) which linked the centre with the south of the island, to pass by the settlement of El Cercado. There will be some short sections of asphalt secondary road before Las Hayas. Fine views from the Ravine of Water – Barranco del Agua – towards the Valle del Gran Rey. Overnight La Gomera.

Day 7: walk, La Gomera. We begin by climbing gently for 20 minutes or so from main road to the summit of La Garajonay, at 1,487 metres the highest point of the island, with wide views and aboriginal remains. Descending to the bus again, we pick up our rucksacks and start downwards, quite a long descent, taking it slowly to admire the beauty of the place, into the heart of the laurisilva forest (c. 9 km) The trees, though varieties of laurel, are genuine forest trees, often tall and stately. We pass the only year-round running stream in the Canaries. Overnight La Gomera.

Day 8: San Sebastián de La Gomera. Optional morning walk through the historic parts of the tiny island capital. Free afternoon to enjoy the gardens and, we hope, the swimming pool at the Parador. Overnight La Gomera.

Day 9. Take the early morning ferry to the south of Tenerife and transfer to the airport in the north by coach. Fly at c. 11.30am to Madrid and on to London Heathrow, arriving c. 6.10pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,650 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on scheduled flights with Iberia Airlines (Airbus A320) and Binter Canarias (ATR 72); ferry crossing; travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 6 dinners with wine, water, coffee and 5 packed lunches; all admission charges; all tips for drivers, waiters, guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the tour leaders and additional guides for the walks. **Single supplement £300** (double room for single occupancy). **Price without international flights £2,440.**

Hotels: in Tenerife (4 nights) a flamboyant hotel in Puerto de la Cruz, 30 minutes drive from the capital, rated locally as 5-star but more comparable to a 4-star; well-furnished bedrooms, attractive gardens, several restaurants, spa and indoor and outdoor pools, good breakfasts. In La Gomera (4 nights): 4-star Parador, a sympathetic new build in convincing Canarian style with an outdoor pool, gardens and sea-views. Evening meals are largely in the hotels.

How strenuous? This is a tour for habitual walkers. We cover a variety of terrain which is generally quite robust with the possibility of sharp (if short) ascents and prolonged descents. Paths are often not well tended and can be rubbly and slippery underfoot, particularly after rain. They require sure-footedness and strong knees. A good level of fitness is required to walk comfortably for over five hours at an altitude of 2,400m. Changes may be made if local conditions are unfavourable for walking however we will always seek to provide a walk. Average distance by coach per day: 38 miles.

Weather: mild, sunny weather can be expected though it will be cold at the higher altitudes on the walks.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

DROTTNINGHOLM & CONFIDENCEN

June 2012

Details will be available in January 2012. Contact us to register your interest.

ART IN SWITZERLAND

WITH AN EXCURSION TO COLMAR

19–24 June 2012 (MY 276)
6 days • £2,380
Lecturer: Dr Alexey Makhrov

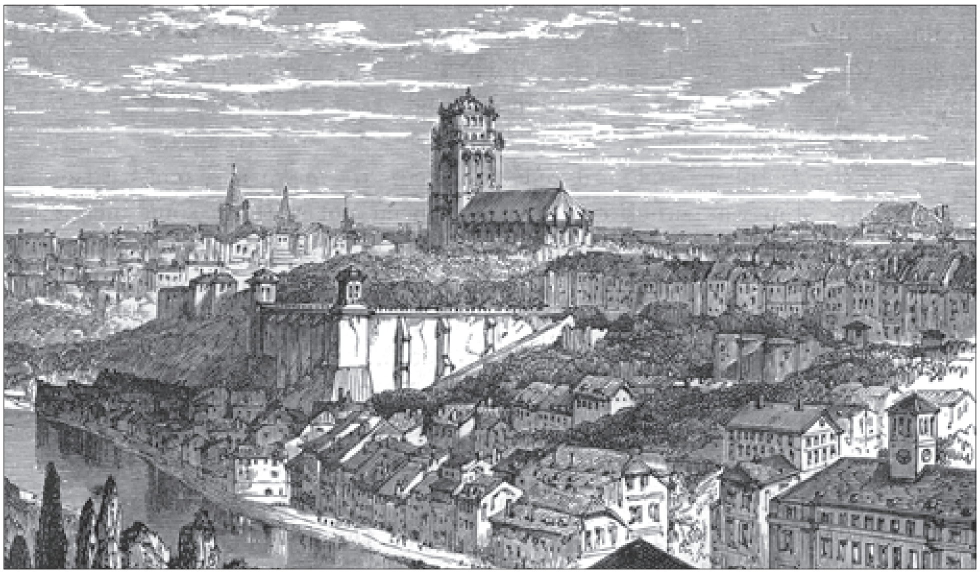
Fine and varied art collections, many displayed in the collectors' homes or in brilliant recent buildings.

Two excellent collections have reopened after several years of closure: Reinhart Römerholz in Winterthur and Abegg near Berne.

Private appointment to see the now closed Bührle Collection in Zürich.

Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and classic modernism figure prominently, but so do European Old Masters, decorative arts and Oriental art.

Excursions to collections outside the city centres pass through picturesque countryside.



Berne, wood engraving 1890 from 'The Life & Times of Queen Victoria' Vol. II.

Switzerland possesses some of the finest of the smaller art collections in Europe. There is no Louvre here and no Uffizi, but several Courtauld Institutes and Burrell Collections.

More than in most countries the cultural map has been formed during the last hundred years by the devotion to art – and ultimately to the beneficence – of wealthy industrialists and men of commerce. There were no kings and princes in Switzerland to lay the foundations of the present-day collections. With a long tradition of relative autonomy and self-sufficiency the cities and cantons have also played a part in creating the current magnificent public art collections.

While artists who were Swiss or who lived in Switzerland are of course amply represented (including Holbein, Fuseli, Hodler, Klee and Giacometti), the whole gamut of western art is to be seen here, with the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists particularly prominent. An added attraction is architectural: some of the collections remain in the collectors' former homes and others have recently been re-housed in brilliant new buildings. And when aesthetic exhaustion sets in there are lakes and mountains and picturesque old cities to refresh the palate.

Itinerary

Day 1: Winterthur. Fly at c. 9.30am from London Heathrow to Zurich. Drive to Winterthur. The recently reopened Oskar Reinhart Collection 'am Römerholz' at the collector's home in tranquil woodland above the city has marvellous Old Masters and Impressionists. Another outstanding private collection, mainly of French and Swiss paintings, is displayed at the Villa Flora nearby. Drive to Zurich for the first of three nights.

Day 2: Zurich. In the historic centre of Zurich visit two churches that have stained glass by Chagall and Augusto Giacometti. The E.G. Bührle Foundation is an astonishingly rich collection of paintings crammed into a suburban mansion and only accessible by private appointment. The Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland's largest art gallery, has Swiss and international art from the Middle Ages to the present day, including a notable collection of twelve works by Edward Munch, the largest outside Norway.

Day 3: Lucerne, Baden. Lucerne, at the juncture of mountains, rivers and lake, has a most attractive historic centre with mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque buildings. The Sammlung Rosengart is an excellent collection. In a 1900 villa, the Langmatt Foundation in Baden displays a fine collection, especially of Impressionists (including twenty-four Renoirs).

Day 4: Berne, Riggisberg. With its promontory setting and arcaded streets, Berne is perhaps the most attractive city in Switzerland. The purpose-built Paul Klee Centre (Renzo Piano) houses a huge collection of the artist's works, and the Kunstmuseum has a good and varied collection of western art. In the hills around Riggisberg visit the Abegg Foundation, an eclectic collection of textiles, silver, sculpture, ceramics and paintings, beautifully displayed and just reopened after extensive refurbishment. First of two nights in Basel.

Day 5: Basel, Colmar. Drive into France to the attractive Alsacian town of Colmar. The Musée d'Unterlinden, occupying a former monastery, is one of the best art museums in France, the outstanding work being Grünewald's great Crucifixion polyptych. Back in Basel, walk via the mediaeval minster to the Kunstmuseum, an excellent collection notable for paintings by one-time resident Hans Holbein. Some free time to explore the lovely old centre, the Historical Museum (furniture, tapestries, silver), Museum of Contemporary Art or the Tinguely Museum.

Day 6: Basel. The Beyeler Foundation has a top quality collection of classic modern art in a stunning building by Renzo Piano. Fly from Basel, arriving Heathrow c. 7.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,380 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus A319); private coach within Switzerland; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 4 dinners, with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £300. Price without flights £2,230.**

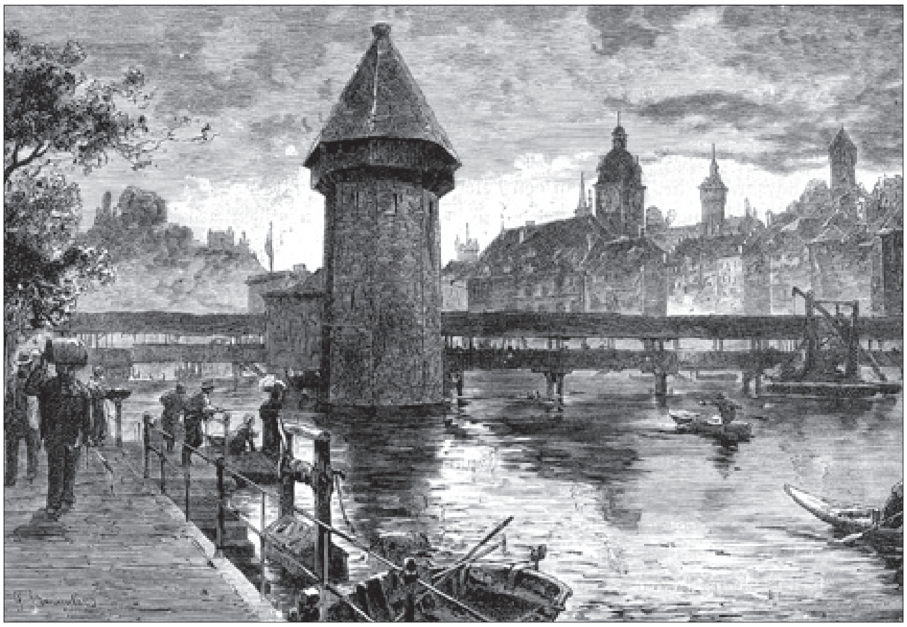
Hotels: in Zurich (3 nights): 4-star hotel excellently located on Lake Zurich within walking distance of the old town, elegantly furnished rooms. In Basel (2 nights): 4-star hotel situated in the historic heart; rooms vary in size.

How strenuous? Quite a lot of walking and standing around in galleries. Average distance by coach per day: 60 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

THE LUCERNE PIANO FESTIVAL

THE WORLD'S FINEST PIANISTS



Lucerne, wood engraving c. 1890.

24–28 November 2011 (MY 123)
5 days • £2,320 (includes 7 concerts)
Lecturer: Geoffrey Norris

November 2012
Details available January 2012.
Contact us to register your interest.

Seven concerts with five of the world's most outstanding pianists: Hélène Grimaud, Lise de la Salle, Alexei Volodin, Marc-André Hamelin and Khatia Buniatishvili; also conductor Maurizio Pollini.

Franz Liszt and he is the main focus of the festival in 2011, the year of his bicentenary.

In a magnificent setting of lake, rivers and mountains, the picturesque city of Lucerne combines a wonderful range of historic architecture with vitality and modernity.

Accompanied in 2011 by critic Geoffrey Norris, Britain's most interesting writer on piano performance.

2011 marks the bicentenary of the birth of Franz Liszt, the composer who in the 19th century opened up previously unimagined vistas of piano technique and colour. The Lucerne Piano Festival has chosen this giant and poet of the keyboard as its main focus this year - and appropriately so, not only because of the anniversary but also because Liszt enshrined images of Switzerland in some of his most famous music, notably the first book of his *Années de pèlerinage*.

The Lucerne Piano Festival has been a magnet for lovers of piano music for well over a decade, attracting as it does pianists of exceptional calibre and wide-ranging repertoire. With its picturesque architecture, its mountainous backdrop and its magnificent modern concert hall on the very shores of the lake, the city provides an inspirational setting in which to hear music and musicians of the highest order. This year's featured artists include Maurizio Pollini, Andreas Haefliger and Hélène Grimaud, together with some remarkable talent from the younger generation, the French pianist Lise de la Salle and the Georgian Khatia Buniatishvili. Marc-André Hamelin unleashes his formidable virtuosity in a solo programme of Liszt, Schumann, Haydn and Fauré, and the brilliant young Russian Alexei Volodin joins the SWR Symphony Orchestra for Liszt's First Piano Concerto in a concert with music by Lyadov and Prokofiev conducted by the Ukrainian firebrand Kirill Karabits.

The festival is truly international and offers the chance to experience the art of the piano in the hands of some of the most compelling pianists of the day.

Itinerary for 2011

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.30am from London Heathrow to Zurich. Drive to Lucerne. *Concert at the Kultur- und Kongresszentrum (KKL) with Andreas Haefliger: Liszt, 'Years of Pilgrimage', first year: Switzerland; Schubert, Sonata in G.*

Day 2. A leisurely start, the first of the music talks and a walking tour with a city guide.Free afternoon. A suggested visit is the Sammlung Rosengart collection of 20th-century art. *Concert at the KKL with Khatia Buniatishvili.* Free afternoon. *Concert at the KKL with Hélène Grimaud, Festival Strings Lucerne: Mozart, Piano Concerto in A; Piano Concerto in F.*

Day 3. *Concert at the KKL with Lise de la Salle: works by Liszt and transcriptions of music by Mozart, Schumann and Wagner.* Among suggestions for the free afternoon is the Bourbaki Panorama. One of the few remaining 19th century panorama paintings it depicts the events of the 1870 Franco-Prussian War. *Concert at the KKL with Alexei Volodin, Baden-Baden & Freiburg Symphony Orchestra, Kirill Karabits (conductor): Liadov, 'Kikimora'; Liszt, Piano Concerto No.1; Liszt, 'Danse Macabre'; Prokofiev; 'Scythian' Suite.*

Day 4. *Concert at the KKL with Marc-André Hamelin: Haydn, Sonata in E minor; Schumann, 'Carnaval'; Wolpe, Passacaglia from 'Four Studies'; Fauré, Nocturne in D flat; Liszt, Reminiscences of 'Norma'.* Free afternoon, perhaps for the history museum, the battlement walk, or the transport museum. *Concert at the KKL with Maurizio Pollini.*

Day 5. Visit the lakeside villa where Richard Wagner spent some of his happiest years. Fly from Zurich to Heathrow, arriving c. 3.30pm.

Practicalities

Price in 2011: £2,320 (deposit £250) including tickets for 7 concerts costing c. £610; air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (Airbus 320); private coach; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £55**. **Price without flights £2,180.**

Hotel: a 4-star hotel dating back to the 16th century, in the historic centre.

How strenuous? Some walking is essential; average distance by coach per day: c. 17 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

LUCERNE SUMMER

July 2012

Details will be available in January.
Contact us to register your interest

OTTOMAN TURKEY

BURSA, IZNIK, ISTANBUL, EDIRNE

27 May–3 June 2012 (MY 264)
8 days • £2,480
Lecturer: Sue Rollin

Stay in Istanbul, capital from 1453, and the earlier Ottoman capitals of Bursa and Edirne.

See fine Ottoman buildings, which constitute perhaps a high point of Islamic architecture.

Study Iznik ceramics and tiles, as well as textiles and craft work in wood and metal.

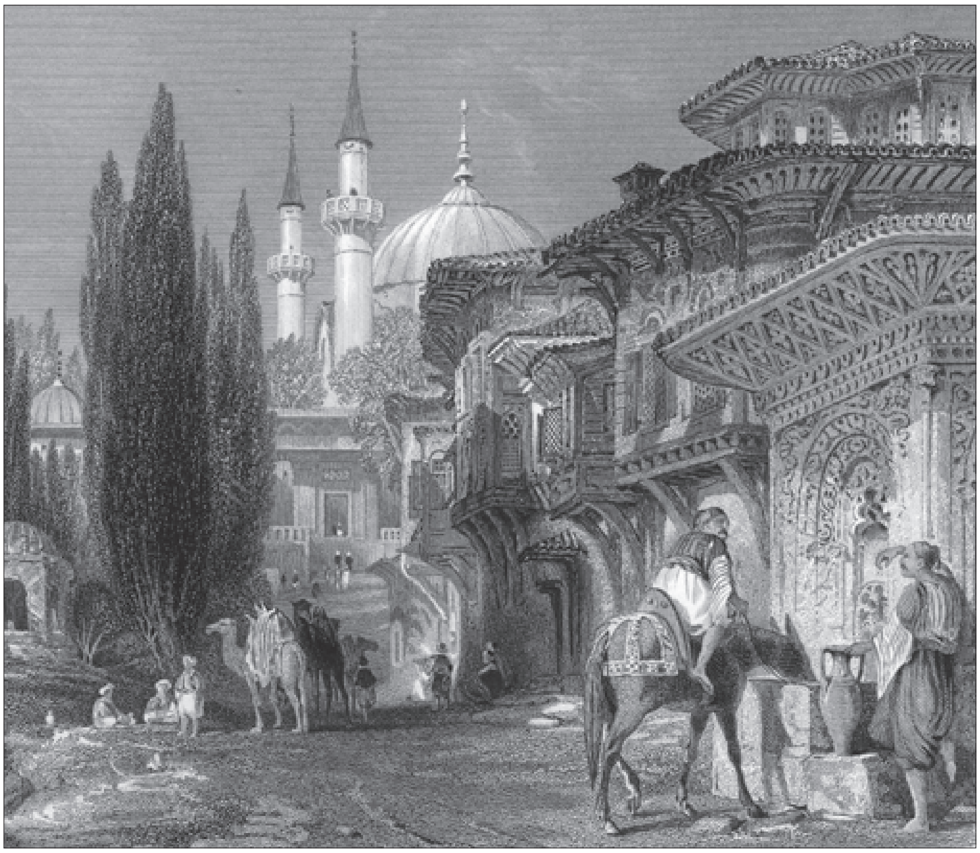
In the world of Islam the sixteenth-century architecture of the Ottoman Empire has few peers. The supreme architect, and the most prolific, was Sinan. With the sixth-century church of Haghia Sophia as the inspiration for many of his buildings, the pupil constantly strove to surpass the master in engineering skill and aesthetic refinements.

Bursa, the first capital of the embryonic Ottoman Empire, is now a vibrant growing town, in an attractive setting at the base of the Dumanli mountain range. The tour appropriately begins here, in order to trace the development of Ottoman art and architecture by seeing its early manifestations first.

At nearby Iznik, in the 16th century, the era of Süleyman the Magnificent, ceramics achieved a peak of perfection, not only in tableware but also in tiles, using a process which has amazingly been lost to history.

Istanbul, formerly Constantinople, was the largest city in the world both in late antiquity and in the Middle Ages. Its fall to the Ottomans in 1453 put their empire on a level with the Persian and Roman empires of the past. It is a deeply fascinating place, with a bewildering history and a mix of opposing cultures, but mosques and minarets still dominate the skyline.

Edirne, formerly Adrianopolis, is an astonishing town, a once thriving capital, rich in architectural treasures, now beached on a byway and rarely reached by tourists. The greatest of all Sinan's mosques is here.



Bursa, steel engraving c. 1850.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.30am from London Heathrow to Istanbul (approximate time in the air: 3 hours 30 minutes). Cross the Bosphorus from Europe to Asia. A short ferry crossing cuts the journey time. Continue the drive south through mainly agricultural land with peach trees and olive groves. First of two nights in Bursa.

Day 2: Bursa. The first settled capital of the Ottoman Empire after its capture from the Byzantines in 1326, retains the sights of the old centre, but the new town now sprawls onto the plateau beneath. Mosques were built by each Sultan from 1326 to 1451, outstanding being the Yesil Camii (Green Mosque) and Yesil Türbe (Green Tomb) with extensive tilework by the Masters of Tabriz. See the mosque and tombs of the Muradiye complex. Situated in the old commercial centre are Ulu Camii (Great Mosque) and the caravanserais whose rents funded the mosques and served the textile trade, famous for its silk velvets. Overnight Bursa.

Day 3: Iznik. Drive to Iznik, formerly the flourishing Roman town of Nicæa, capital in the 13th century of the Byzantine emperors-in-exile; now a charming and unspoilt country town within concentric circuits of Roman and Byzantine walls. The museum in the beautiful hospice of Nilüfer Hatun tells the story of ceramic production from the Byzantine period to the great frit wares of the 16th century. Continue northwards and re-cross the Bosphorus. First of three nights in Istanbul.

Day 4: Istanbul. Begin with monuments of the Byzantine city around the hippodrome, chief of which is Haghia Sophia, greatest of all Byzantine buildings and the inspiration for many Ottoman mosques. The nearby Yerebatan Saray is a remarkable colonnaded cistern. There is an excellent museum of Islamic and Turkish art in the Ibrahim Pasha Sarayi. The Kariye Camii (St Saviour in Chora) has the finest Byzantine mosaics and wall paintings in the world. Optional visit of the old commercial district and Covered Bazaar.

Day 5: Istanbul. In the Topkapi Sarayi, palace of the Sultans informally arranged around a series of courtyards, are magnificent museums of Turkish arts and Chinese porcelain. A fine work by the great Ottoman architect Sinan is the Süleymaniye Mosque, the enormous and elegant complex includes madrassas, shops and tombs (currently undergoing restoration) overlooking the Golden Horn. The mosque of Rüstem Pasha is small but brilliantly embellished with tiles. Nearby is the colourful and aromatic spice market. Overnight Istanbul.

Day 6: The Bosphorus. Travel by private boat along the Bosphorus to Sariyer. Visit the Sadberk Hanim Museum, a private collection of Turkish art and ancient archaeology. Lunch by the Bosphorus. Overnight in Edirne, near the border with Greece and Bulgaria.

Day 7: Edirne. European capital of the Ottoman Empire until 1453. The Eski Camii (Old Mosque) shows the continuation of the tradition established at Bursa. The mosque and hospital complex of Sultan Beyazit II, delightfully situated on the banks of the Tunca. The Üç Serefeli Mosque was the first Ottoman mosque to have a courtyard, and the first step towards the classical building style of the 16th-century, exemplified by the nearby Selimiye, Sinan's masterpiece. Return to Istanbul for the final night.

Day 8: Istanbul. Sinan's small Sokollu Mosque is cleverly set into the hillside above the Sea of Marmara and inlaid with some of the finest Iznik tiles produced. Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque), despite its fame, marks the beginning of the decline of Ottoman architecture. Drive past the massive Byzantine walls to the Yedikule fortress. Fly to Heathrow, arriving c. 7.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,480 (deposit £250) this includes: air travel (economy class) on British Airways flights (aircraft: Boeing 767); travel by private coach throughout; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, two lunches and six dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions to sites, museums, etc; gratuities for waiters, drivers, guides; all state and airport taxes; the services of the lecturer and of a local guide. **Single supplement £70**. **Price without flights £2,250.**

Visa: British nationals need a visa. This is obtained upon arrival at the airport and currently costs £10 (not included in the tour price). Nationals of other countries should check their requirements.

Hotels: Bursa (2 nights): a small comfortable hotel in a tranquil setting just outside the town, built in the style of an Ottoman house. Istanbul (4 nights in total): well located in the Sultanahmet area, this hotel is locally rated as 5-star, with elegant rooms and a roof terrace. Edirne (1 night): a converted caravanserai with a sense of the traditional local hostelry, the best available hotel, fairly basic but adequate.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking within the towns, and paving is uneven. On some days there are several hours of driving. There are three hotel changes. Average distance by coach per day: 66 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

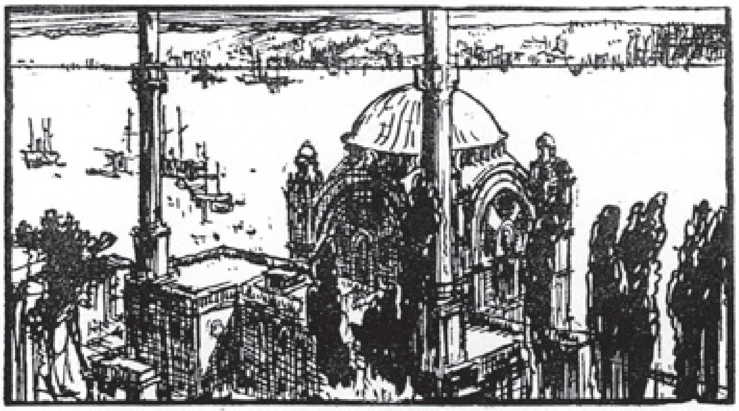
EASTERN TURKEY

May 2012

Details available September 2011.
Contact us to register your interest.

ISTANBUL

BYZANTINE & OTTOMAN METROPOLIS



Istanbul, after Frank Brangwyn c. 1910.

16–22 April 2012 (MY 226)
7 days • £2,240
Lecturer: Jane Taylor

7–13 May 2012 (MY 236)
7 days • £2,240
Lecturer: Rowena Loverance

3–9 September 2012 (MZ 367)
7 days • £2,240
Lecturer: Jane Taylor

An extraordinarily diverse city: Roman remains; outstanding Byzantine buildings; glorious mosaics and frescoes; Ottoman mosques and palaces.

Stay in the heart of the Sultanahmet.

The radical transformations this city underwent are vividly expressed by its changes of name: Byzantium, Constantinople and Istanbul. The capital successively of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, it is one of the most beautiful and fascinating cities in the world.

Initially a modest Greek city, it was chosen by Constantine as the site of the new capital of the Roman Empire and inaugurated in AD 330. The Byzantine Empire continued in direct succession to the Roman, and its capital became one of the largest cities in mediaeval Europe, the guardian of classical culture and a bastion of Christianity.

The city walls were the most powerful in the western world, and while the Byzantine empire gradually shrank before the onslaughts of Persians and Arabs and Latin Crusaders, it was not finally extinguished until 1453 when Ottoman Turks captured the city.

In the century and a half after the Ottoman conquest the city steadily acquired some of the finest Islamic architecture in the world, aided by the example of Haghia Sophia, the architect Sinan and the brilliant tile factories at Iznik.

Minarets and mosques now dominate the skyline, but churches, temples, palaces and other pre-Ottoman buildings, whole or fragmentary, and the arts which decorated them, are to be found in abundance.

Istanbul has evolved into a melting-pot of cultures, with a lively streetlife and colourful bazaars. The city's international outlook is epitomised by its division between Europe and Asia, now linked by modern bridges crossing the mighty Bosphorus.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at 11.30am from London Heathrow to Istanbul. A short stroll around the Hippodrome before dinner, originally constructed c. AD 200 by Septimus Severus, it was completely rebuilt on a larger scale by Constantine and inaugurated in AD 330. It was at the centre of civil life in Byzantine Constantinople.

Day 2. A day spent concentrating on the Byzantine monuments. Begin with Haghia Sophia, the 6th-century church which is the chief monument of Christian Byzantium. The ornamental pavement belonging to the Byzantine Great Palace is displayed in the small Mosaic Museum. Fethiye Camii, former church of the Pammakaristos, now part functioning mosque, part mosaic museum. The Kariye Camii (St Saviour in Chora) possesses the finest assemblage of Byzantine mosaics and frescoes to survive anywhere.

Day 3. Yerebatan Saray is a remarkable colonnaded cistern. The Archaeological Museum has an outstanding collection of ancient art and artefacts, Hellenistic and Roman sculpture, and sarcophagi. Visit the mosque complex of Sultan Beyazit II, with fine portals, minarets and courtyards. Optional walk through the Grand Bazaar and free time.

Day 4. Sultan Ahmet Camii (Blue Mosque) is the last of Istanbul's imperial mosques. Contrast the large and imposing Süleymaniye complex (the tombs are currently undergoing restoration), masterpiece of the great architect

Sinan, with his beautiful small Rüstem Pasha Camii. Brief walk through the Spice Bazaar. The excellent Islamic Museum in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace has textiles and various artefacts. Finish with another small Sinan mosque, the Sokollu Mehmet Pasha Camii.

Day 5. Topkapı Palace was the Sultan's residence and the political centre of the Ottoman Empire. Now used to display the Imperial Treasury, it contains the finest surviving collection of Islamic precious objects and an outstanding collection of Chinese porcelain. Free afternoon to explore independently.

Day 6. Travel by private boat along the Bosphorus, the historic and beautiful strait which divides Europe from Asia, for superb views of Istanbul and the villas and castles of its suburbs. See Beylerbei Palace, an imperial summer residence during the late Ottoman Empire. The Sadberk Hanim Museum is a mansion with fine collections spanning the whole period of Anatolian civilizations.

Day 7. Drive beside the Golden Horn to the suburb of Eyüp where there is an important Islamic shrine. Continue along the massive Byzantine land walls to the Yediküle Fortress. Fly from Istanbul, arriving Heathrow c. 3.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,240 (deposit £250). This includes: air travel (economy class) with Turkish Airlines; (Airbus 310, Boeing 737); travel by private coach and boat; accommodation as below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and a Turkish guide. **Single supplement £290** (double for sole use). **Price without flights £2,010**.

Hotel: An elegant hotel, locally rated as 5-star, in the heart of the Sultanahmet, close to the Blue Mosque; rooms are spacious, stylishly furnished and well equipped; roof terrace with views of the Bosphorous; included dinners are at the hotel or selected restaurants.

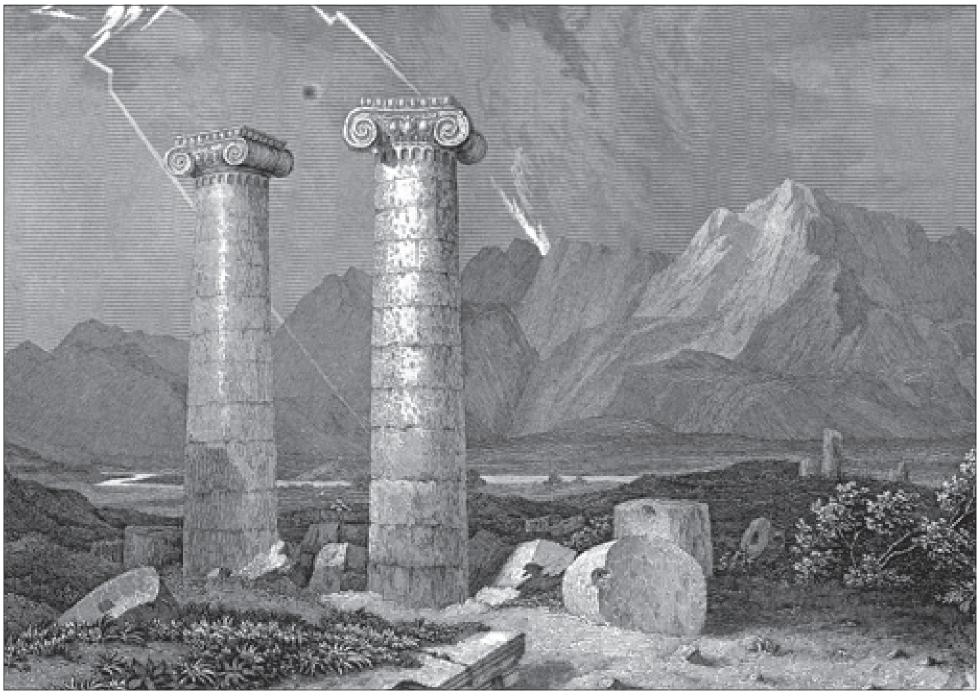
Visa: British nationals need a visa. This is obtained upon arrival at the airport and currently costs £10 (not included in the tour price). Nationals of other countries should check their requirements.

How strenuous? You will be on your feet a lot, walking and standing around. Istanbul is quite hilly and not suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stairclimbing. Average distance by coach per day: 9 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

CLASSICAL TURKEY

GREEKS & ROMANS IN ANATOLIA



Sardis, mid-19th-century steel engraving.

9–18 April 2012 (MY 204)
10 days • £3,390
Lecturer: Henry Hurst

8–17 October 2012 (MZ 389)
10 days • £3,390
Lecturer: to be confirmed

The most prosperous region of the ancient Mediterranean world.

The finest collection of Hellenistic and Roman city ruins to be found anywhere.

All the major sites and many which are off the beaten track or difficult to get to.

Scenically varied and spectacular: coast, mountain and plain.

The Turks were latecomers to Turkey. Greeks had settled on the western fringes over two thousand years before and, as recounted in *The Iliad*, had been meddling in Anatolian affairs a few centuries earlier still.

After the demise of the Mycenaean civilization of Homer's heroes, large numbers of Hellenes migrated from Greece to Aegean Anatolia and its offshore islands. First, around 1100 BC, Aeolians came to settle in the northern part of this coastal area, then Ionians moved into terrain further down the coast, to be followed at the end of the tenth century by Dorians who established themselves yet further south.

They founded cities all along the Aegean coast and in due course along the river valleys into the heart of Anatolia and along the Mediterranean coast to the south. Most of the peoples the Greeks encountered eventually became Hellenised.

No less than the Greeks of Greece proper, Asian Greeks contributed to the 'Greek miracle' by supplying philosophers, mathematicians, sculptors, architects and other civilization-builders of genius. The canon of classical architecture owes much to the Asian cities – not least the Ionic order, which appears in the gigantic temples of the Ionic coast, prodigies of architecture produced by the confluence of civilisations in the region.

The Asian Greek cities succumbed willingly to Alexander. Freed from the Persian threat, they piled up the riches – material and architectural – of the Hellenistic period and became more numerous, more prosperous and more progressive than the western Greeks. They slipped with equal ease into membership of the Roman Empire.

Imperial Rome was besotted by the Greek achievement. Greek culture proved more enduring than Roman, and after the fifth-century collapse of the western empire the use of Latin soon languished. Despite the subsequent collapse of trade, the destruction of the Aegean cities by the Sassanids and the invasions of Anatolia by Selçuk and Ottoman Turks, the Greek language and other aspects of Greek culture and Christianity, the new religion of the Greeks, were never entirely extinguished in Asia Minor.

The abandoned ancient cities now comprise the most magnificent set of Archaic, Classical and, particularly, Hellenistic and Roman remains. While the proximity of some of the sites to holiday resorts and cruise ports means that they are also among the most visited, others are still relatively difficult of access and far from the beaten track. And the settings are usually ravishing: whether coastal, mountain or plateau, the landscapes provide a backdrop for this tour of extraordinary beauty.

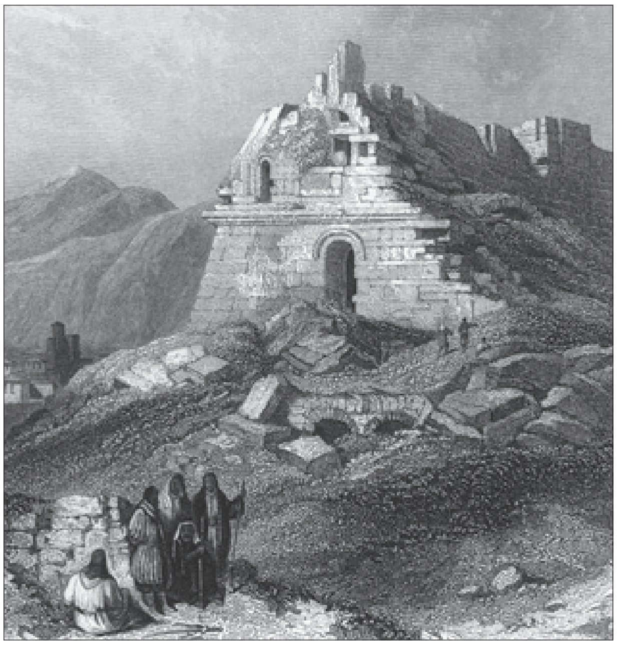
Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.25am from London Heathrow to Izmir (via Istanbul). Supper in the hotel. First of three nights in Izmir.

Day 2: Pergamon. Under the Hellenistic Attalid dynasty, Pergamon became the most powerful city-state in Asia Minor, rivalling Athens and Alexandria as a centre of culture. On a steep-sided hill are remains of Attalid palaces, Temple of Dionysus and Altar of Zeus (most of which is now in Berlin). The Asclepieon and 'Temple of Serapis' (Red Fort) lie on flat ground below. Overnight Izmir.

Day 3: Sardis, Izmir. Drive inland to Sardis, capital of the Kingdom of Lydia, whose last independent ruler was the fabulously wealthy Croesus (560–546 BC), it later became an important Roman city. See the impressive remains of the Temple of Artemis, the reconstructed theatre façade, 'Marble Court', gymnasium and the 3rd-century synagogue, the largest in the ancient world. Free time in Izmir, Greek Smyrna. Overnight Izmir.

Day 4: Ephesus. Drive south to Ephesus, the principal port and commercial centre on the Aegean coast under the Roman Empire and capital of the province of Asia, with a population of 400,000 in the 2nd-century AD. The most popular pagan pilgrimage destination in the Graeco-Roman world, the city was also key to the development of Christianity. Ruined by the sedimentation of its estuary and finally sacked in the 7th-century, Ephesus has become the most extensively excavated site of the ancient world. Begin with the remains of the Temple of Artemis, before the first visit to the main site which has an abundance of paved streets, public buildings, temples, gymnasia and courtyard houses. Among the more striking buildings are the Library of Celsus and the theatre, originally seating 24,000 and scene of the protest against St Paul described in the Acts of the Apostles. First of three nights in Kusadasi.



Miletus, steel engraving c. 1860.

Day 5: Priene, Didyma, Miletus. A small city of the Dodecapolis in southern Ionia, Priene is magnificently sited above the Maeander plain. Its hillside site ill-suiting it for Roman commerce, the remains date largely from the late Classical and early Hellenistic periods, and it exhibits one of the earliest of grid street layouts. The Temple of Athena Polias at the summit was designed by the architect Pythius. Didyma was a sanctuary with an oracle which, for a time, rivalled that at Delphi. Impressive remains of the colossal Hellenistic Temple of Apollo. Miletus, massive, well-preserved Roman theatre, baths of Foeustina, wife of Marcus Aurelius. Overnight Kusadasi.

Day 6: Selçuk, Ephesus. In Selçuk see the restored Basilica of St John at the top of Ayasuluk hill, and the Isla Bey mosque at the bottom. A second visit to the vast site of Ephesus, or a free afternoon in the attractive coastal town of Kusadasi.

Day 7: Aphrodisias. Leave the coast and drive into the interior of Anatolia. One of the most beautiful classical sites in Turkey, Aphrodisias was the centre of a Roman cult of Aphrodite. An important school for the production of high quality and widely exported sculpture, there are many fine examples in the museum. Among the architectural remains are the Temple of Aphrodite and the largest and most complete stadium to have survived from the ancient world. Overnight Pamukkale.

Day 8: Hierapolis, Antalya. Hierapolis prospered under the Romans and Byzantines as a centre of thermal healing, and the nearby modern resort of Pamukkale still prospers. The archaeological museum is housed in what was the 2nd-century Roman baths. Founded by (and named after) Attalus II of Pergamum, Antalya was the principal port in Pamphylia in ancient and Byzantine times. The Archaeological Museum has exhibits from Pre-history to Ottoman. Two nights in Antalya.

Day 9: Perge, Aspendos, Termessos, Antalya. Colonised by the Greeks after the Trojan War, Perge has substantial Hellenistic and Roman gates and colonnaded streets. While the Roman aqueduct at Aspendos is the best-preserved in Asia Minor, the marvellously complete theatre is the best-preserved in the whole of the Roman world. Optional afternoon visit to Termessos, surrounded by rugged mountains, with spectacular views from the theatre on the edge of a precipice; or a free afternoon to explore Antalya.

Day 10. Fly from Antalya (via Istanbul) arriving Heathrow c. 3.15pm.

Practicalities

Price: £3,390 (deposit £350) This includes: air travel (economy class) on Turkish Airlines flights (Airbus A330, Boeing 738); travel by private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 7 lunches (some are picnics) and 8 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and of a Turkish guide. **Single supplement £370. Price without all flights £3,110.**

Hotels: in Izmir (3 nights): large, modern 5-star hotel overlooking the Citadel and old port. In Kusadasi (3 nights): old-fashioned yet elegant 4-star hotel, rooms have balconies and views across the Aegean. In Pamukkale (1 night): large spa hotel with swimming pools. In Antalya (2 nights): modern, central 5-star hotel overlooking Antalya bay and the Taurus Mountains.

Visa: British nationals need a visa, this is obtained upon arrival at the airport and currently costs £10 (not included in the tour price). Nationals of other countries should check their requirements.

How strenuous? This tour covers long distances by coach and much of the walking is over rough ground at sites which requires agility and stamina. There are three hotel changes. Average distance by coach per day: 80 miles.

Small group: 12 to 22 participants.

MEDIAEVAL MIDDLE ENGLAND

LEICESTERSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, RUTLAND, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

2–6 July 2012 (MY 298)
5 days • £1,550
Lecturer: John McNeill

A new tour for 2012.

Well-balanced survey of the outstanding mediaeval monuments of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Northamptonshire and the Soke of Peterborough.

Beautiful drives through understated verdant landscapes.

Led by a mediaeval architectural historian.

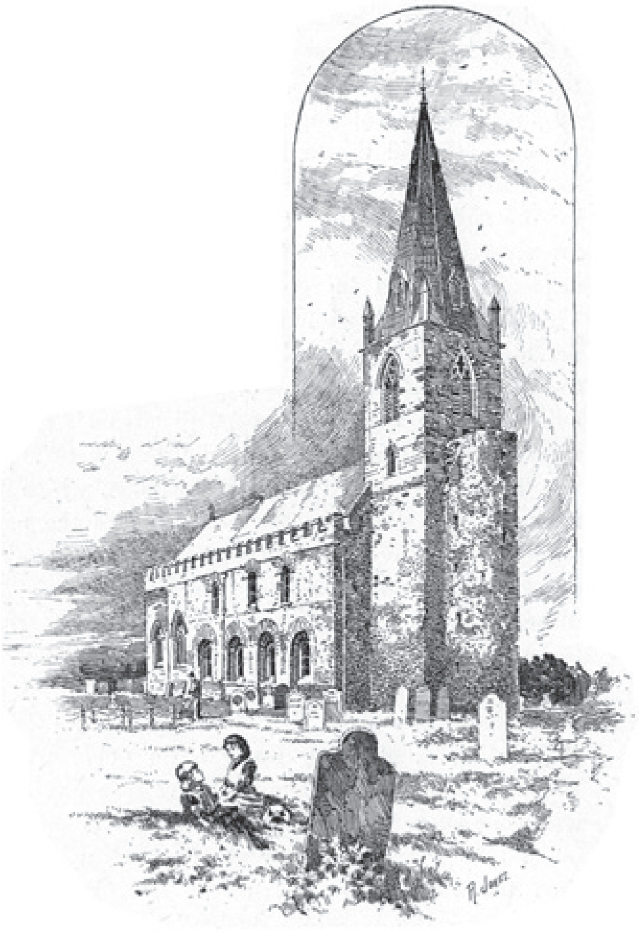
Stay in one hotel throughout, a former country house in quiet countryside.

The East Midlands boasts some of the finest mediaeval ecclesiastical architecture in England. The region largely corresponds to the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia, which converted to Christianity during the seventh century and had already established a widespread network of churches and monasteries by the eighth century.

Though the rich, agricultural territory remained disputed between the Saxons and the Danes until the Normans finally brought stability, those looking to explore its pre- and post-Conquest heritage will be delighted to find outstanding examples of Saxon, Norman and Gothic architecture.

Two of the most impressive buildings the tour visits are Peterborough Cathedral and Southwell Minster. Peterborough, one of the five great mediaeval abbey churches, is the least altered of England's Norman cathedrals, with a nave that retains the original 13th-century painted wooden roof – one of only four in Europe. Southwell Minster, with its distinctive pepper-pot spires, is another exceptional example of the Norman and Early English styles.

The area is notable, too, for its fine mediaeval parish churches and amongst the highlights of the visit are: All Saints' Brixworth, England's largest and best preserved Saxon church; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Northampton, built shortly after the First Crusade and inspired by the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; and the 14th-century St Mary Magdalen, Newark upon Trent, with its remarkable panel painting from the Dance of the Death.



Brixworth, wood engraving 1896 from 'Cathedrals, Abbeys and Churches of England and Wales' Vol. II.

Itinerary

Day 1: Peterborough, Barnack. The coach leaves Peterborough Railway Station at 2.00pm for the short drive to Peterborough Cathedral, proud possessor of the most ambitious mediaeval painted ceiling to survive in England, as well as a majestic Romanesque nave, fan-vaulted east end and astonishingly inventive west front. A brief visit to the important early Gothic parish church of Barnack. First of four nights in Stapleford.

Day 2: Southwell, Hawton, Newark, Holme. A day devoted to Nottinghamshire, beginning with Southwell Minster, the pre-eminent mediaeval church of the county and a building justly celebrated for the exquisite naturalistic foliage of its chapter-house. Thence to the breathtaking early-14th-century chancel at Hawton. Visit Newark-on-Trent, whose mid-12th-century castle and new river crossing sowed the seeds of prosperity for the town which led to the rebuilding of St Mary Magdalen as one of the finest of all English late mediaeval parish churches. Cross the Trent to the tiny jewel-like church in Holme.

Day 3: Brixworth, Northampton, Earls Barton, Higham Ferrers, Geddington. A perfect opportunity to slip south into Northamptonshire. First to the great Anglo-Saxon minster church at Brixworth, and on to a wonderful pair of Romanesque churches: lavishly sculpted St Peter and the centrally-planned Holy Sepulchre, in Northampton. Drive to Earl's Barton, the town beautifully punctuated by its late Anglo-Saxon tower, before continuing to Edmund Crouchback's stunning church at Higham Ferrers and the most delicate of the surviving Eleanor Crosses at Geddington.

Day 4: Melton Mowbray, Gaddesby, Oakham, Castor, Fotheringhay. A day of local horizons, starting with the majestic late mediaeval town church at Melton Mowbray, and maturing via Decorated Gaddesby, late-12th-century Oakham Castle, Romanesque Castor and the sometime Yorkist mausoleum at Fotheringhay.

Day 5: Tickencote, Stamford. Drive along the northern shore of Rutland water to the enchanting Romanesque parish church at Tickencote. In Stamford visit the important late mediaeval chantry foundation known as Browne's Hospital and the superb late mediaeval stained glass at St Martin. Return to Peterborough Railway Station by 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,550 (deposit £200). This includes: travel by luxurious private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and all dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions and donations; tips for restaurant staff and drivers; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement: £380.**

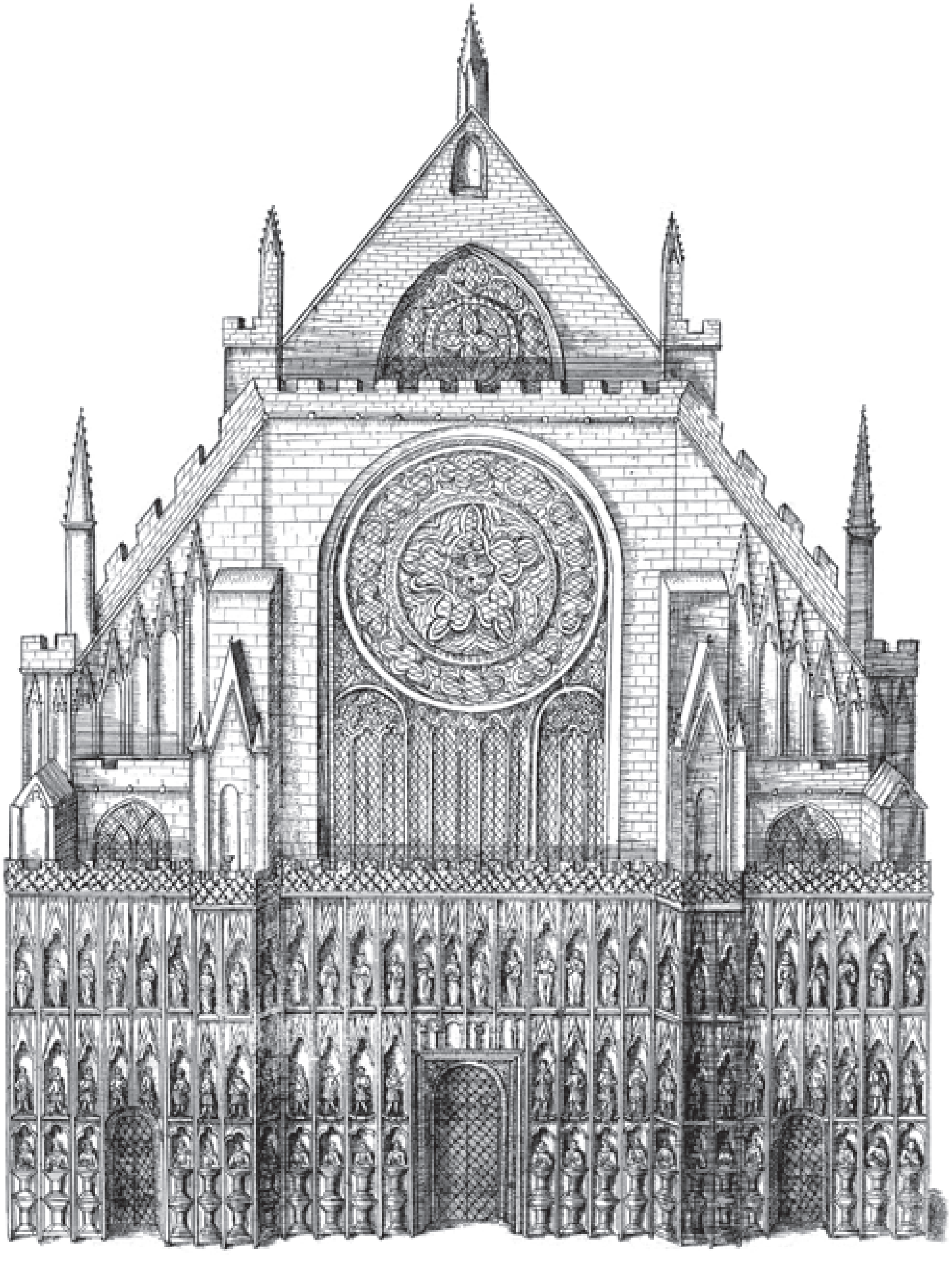
Accommodation: set in extensive grounds and farmland, the Stapleford Park Hotel was converted from a private country house just 25 years ago; several very attractive public rooms, a large garden, spa and indoor swimming pool; rooms have a contemporary décor.

How strenuous? This tour involves quite a lot of getting on and off coaches and standing around and should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 73 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

West Country Churches

Mediaeval Art & Architecture in the South-west



Exeter Cathedral, copper engraving 1655.

28 May–1 June 2012 (MY 263)
5 days • £1,120
Lecturer: Dr Cathy Oakes

Bristol, Wells and Exeter cathedrals.

Based in Wells, with a cluster of architecturally eminent parish churches in its surrounding area.

Led by an architectural historian.

The mediaeval architecture of the English West Country, particularly in the great arc of land between Bristol and Exeter, is rightly celebrated for the regional distinction and inventiveness of its major monuments, qualities which endured throughout the Middle Ages. This imaginative originality was also extended to its parish churches and, most remarkably, can be traced back to a period from which little survives in south-western England, the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The buildings we visit range from the late Anglo-Saxon to the early Tudor, though it would be foolish not to play to the region's strengths, and the majority belong to the later Middle Ages.

The pre-eminent buildings are, of course, Bristol, Wells and Exeter cathedrals, each of them variously extended, refurbished and embellished between the late thirteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, each of them retaining much of their mediaeval statuary, furniture and stained glass. Each also belongs to wider precincts, that at Wells exceptionally well preserved, in whose vicar's close and various gates one might glimpse some of the most influential structures of mediaeval England.

Wells is in many ways the ideal place to stay, for it sits towards the middle of an unusual concentration of parish churches of national importance, a significant theme of the tour. And with the buildings of the calibre of Lullington, Isle Abbots, Compton Martin and Steeple Ashton we will not want for masterpieces of parish church design.

Itinerary

Day 1: Bristol. The coach departs at 2.00pm from Bristol Temple Meads railway station for the short drive to Bristol Cathedral. A breathtaking hall church which stands among the most innovative early 14th-century buildings in Europe. Cross the river to the great mercantile parish church, St Mary Redcliffe, a dazzling amalgam of eye-catching porches, fancy vaults and decorated detailing.

Day 2: Wells, Compton Martin. A morning at Wells Cathedral beginning with the cloisters, progressing through the nave, west front, chapter house and that marvellous sequence of contrasted spaces that make up the east end; architecture, sculpture and stained glass to the fore. The afternoon is spent at St Cuthbert and then over the Mendips to visit the Romanesque church of St Michael at Compton Martin.

Day 3: Exeter, Ottery St Mary, Glastonbury. South-west to Exeter Cathedral, a building whose contemporary liturgical furnishings and western image screen constitute one of the most complete ensembles of mediaeval work still to be found in a north European city. Visit Bishop Grandisson's collegiate foundation at Ottery St Mary and the stunning 12th–14th century ruins at Glastonbury Abbey.

Day 4: Isle Abbots, Muchelney, Huish Episcopi. A leisurely morning in south-east Somerset: Isle Abbots, an unusually heterogeneous and satisfying late mediaeval parish church; Muchelney, an important ruined Benedictine Abbey with surviving abbot's lodging; Huish Episcopi, greatest of the Somerset church towers. A free afternoon.

Day 5: Lullington, Steeple Ashton, Bradford on Avon. The morning is spent hugging the borders of Somerset and Wiltshire. Lullington, a virtually intact Romanesque parish church with exceptional sculpture, Steeple Ashton, superb late 15th-century church with extravagant wooden vault and Bradford on Avon, accomplished and enigmatic late Anglo-Saxon chapel of St Laurence. Return to Bristol Temple Meads station by 4.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,120 (deposit £150). This includes: coach transfers from Bristol Temple Meads railway station and travel throughout the tour; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners at the hotel with wine, water and coffee; all admissions and donations for churches, cathedrals and sites; all tips for drivers and restaurant staff; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £60.**

Hotel: in Wells throughout. The Swan is a 3-star hotel in a 15th-century building close to the cathedral. Rooms have been recently refurbished but vary in size and in furnishings. Although we book double rooms for sole occupancy for single travellers, the rooms are smaller and have a less picturesque view than those occupied by two people. The hotel has a lounge bar, restaurant and a courtyard garden. There is no lift.

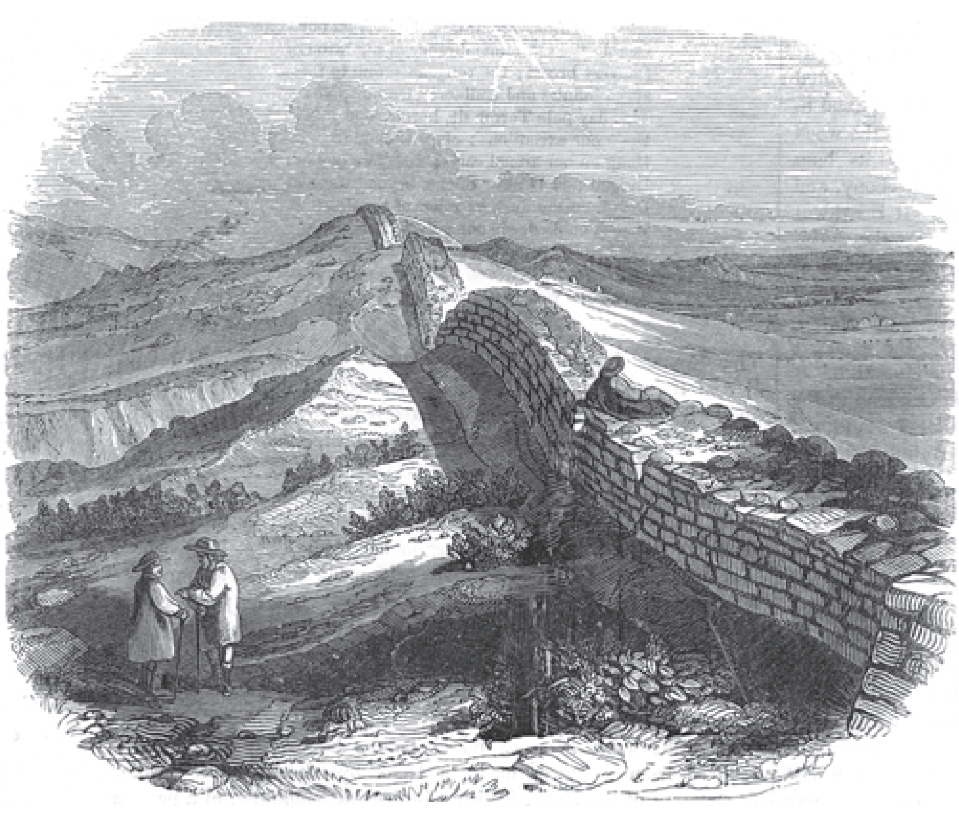
How strenuous? This tour would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and who cannot stand for the many church visits. Average distance by coach per day: 60 miles.

Small group: this tour will operate with between 10 and 22 participants.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

WALKING HADRIAN'S WALL

ROMAN CIVILIZATION AT THE EDGE OF AN EMPIRE



The Wall near Housesteads, wood engraving c. 1888.

20–26 May 2012 (MY 253)
7 days • £1,790
Lecturer: Professor David Breeze

9–15 September 2012 (MZ 351)
7 days • £1,790
Lecturer: Professor Richard Hingley

The archaeology and history of the largest Roman construction in northern Europe.

The most spectacular stretches accessible only on foot, this is also a walking tour through some of the most magnificent scenery in England.

Excursions from coast to coast include all the major Roman sites and relevant museums.

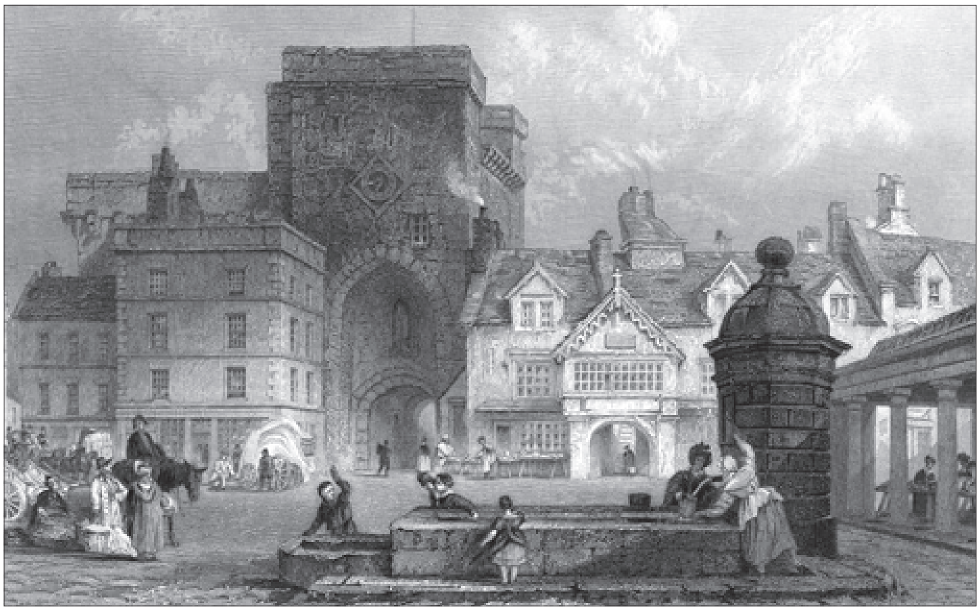
One hotel throughout, the best in the region.

Traversing England from the Tyne estuary to the Solway Firth, the Wall was conceived and ordered by Emperor Hadrian in AD 122 to mark and control the northernmost limit of the Roman Empire. The ambition was extraordinary, its fulfilment – far from the pools of skills and prosperity in the Mediterranean heartlands of the Empire – astonishing: a fifteen-foot high wall 75 miles long through harsh, undulating terrain with 80 milecastles, 161 intermediate turrets and flanking earthwork ditches and ramparts.

Fifteen or sixteen forts, many straddling the Wall, housed a garrison of 12–15,000 soldiers from radically different climes elsewhere in the Empire including Syria, Libya, Dalmatia, Spain and Belgium. A populous penumbra of supply bases and civilian settlements grew up nearby. As a feat of organisation, engineering and will power, Hadrian's Wall ranks among the most extraordinary of all Roman achievements. Its story does not end with its completion within Hadrian's reign because for the remaining three centuries of Roman control there were constant changes both to the fabric and to its administration and occupation.

A study of the Wall leads to an examination of practically every aspect of Roman civilization, from senatorial politics in Rome to the mundanities of life of ordinary Romans – and Britons – who lived in its shadow. But the Wall itself remains the fascinating focus, and the subject of endless academic debate. It's not even clear what exactly it was for.

For the modern-day visitor the Wall has the further, inestimable attraction of passing some of the most magnificent and unspoilt countryside in England. Happily, archaeological interest is greatest where the landscape is at its most thrilling, and it is in this central section, furthest from centres of population, that the tour concentrates. The principal excavated sites can be visited with no



Hexham, steel engraving 1835.

more exertion than on an average sightseeing outing, but to see the best surviving stretches of the Wall, and to appreciate the vastness of the Roman achievement, to view many of its details and to immerse fully in the scenic beauties, there is no substitute for leaving wheels behind and walking along its course.

How strenuous are the walks? On each of the five full days there is a walk of between two and three hours, covering between two and four miles. The slow progress is in part due to stops to examine the archaeology and to take in the wonderful views. But also the terrain is often quite rough, and periodically there are rises and falls, sometimes quite steep, though rarely of more than 50 metres and often aided by rough-hewn stone steps recently made for the Hadrian's Wall Path. It is not a tough trek but nevertheless it should only be attempted by people whose regular country walks include some uphill elements.

A coach takes you to the start of each walk and meets you at the end, eliminating the need to retrace steps or carry much except water and waterproofs. Each day has been planned to provide a balanced mix of archaeology, more general sight-seeing and cross-country trekking, and for this reason the walks do not constitute a linear progression. On most days you return to the hotel by 5.00pm, allowing plenty of time to relax before dinner.

Itinerary

Day 1: Housesteads. The coach leaves Newcastle Central Station at 2.15pm (or from the hotel at 1.30pm) and takes you straight out to Housesteads. With standing remains of up to 10 feet, this is the best preserved of the Wall's forts and evocatively reveals the usual panoply of perimeter walls and gateways, headquarters building, commander's palatial residence, granaries, hospital, latrines. Remote and rugged, there are superb views.

Day 2: walk Steel Rig to Cawfields; Corbridge. The first walk is perhaps the most consistently rugged as it follows long, well-preserved stretches of the Wall through moorland above the cliffs of the Whinsill Crag; a thrilling walk (2¾ miles, up to 2½ hours). Pub lunch. Corbridge began as a fort in the chain built by Agricola c. AD 85 but left to the south by Hadrian's Wall it became a supply depot and then a largely civilian town.

Day 3: walk Housesteads to Steel Rig; Chesters. Again for much of the route the Wall rides the crest of the faultline of dolerite crags, dipping and climbing. There are spectacular stretches, excellently preserved milecastles, staggering views: moorland, lakes, conifer forests to the north, richly variegated greens, plentiful livestock, distant vistas to the south (3½ miles, up to 2¾ hours). Pub lunch. Chesters, the most salubrious of the forts (lavish bath house), built for 500 Asturian cavalrymen, in enchanting river valley setting.

Day 4: Vindolanda, Hexham; a barbarian view. The fort and town of Vindolanda is the site of ongoing excavations which are revealing everyday artefacts including, famously, the 'postcard' writing tablets which uniquely document details of everyday life. There is free time in Hexham, a delightful market town with a very fine 13th-century abbey church. An optional walk in the later afternoon (2½ miles, 1½ hours) just north of the Wall, provides a barbarians' view of the Roman Empire.

Day 5: walk Thirlwell to Birdoswald; Chesters, Bricolitia. Walk through low-lying and pretty farmland with streams, wild flowers, villages (3¼ miles, 2 hours) good lengths of the Vallum, the southern earthwork defence, and of the Wall. At the fort of Birdoswald the massive granaries survive particularly well. Pub lunch followed by a couple of archaeological remains, the Mithraic temple at Brocolitia and the bridge abutments across the river from Chesters.

Day 6: walk Cawfields to Walltown; Carlisle, Bowness-on-Solway. The final walk is spectacularly varied, from lowland pasture climbing to rocky hilltops (3½ miles, 2½ hours). Great Chesters Fort has good remains of turrets and milecastles, with lengths of the Wall up to two metres high. Drive to Carlisle to see the Wall collections in the Tullie House Museum, and continue to the evocative estuarial landscape of the Solway Firth. The Wall ended at the remote village of Bowness-on-Solway.

Day 7: Newcastle, Wallsend. At aptly named Wallsend and now engulfed in the Tyneside conurbation, Segedunum was the most easterly of the forts, the layout clearly seen from a viewing platform. In Newcastle the Great North Museum has the best collection of objects excavated along the Wall. The coach takes you to the Newcastle station by 3.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,790 (deposit £200). This includes: hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, beer, water, coffee; private coach; all admissions (English Heritage members will be refunded c. £20); all tips; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £120.**

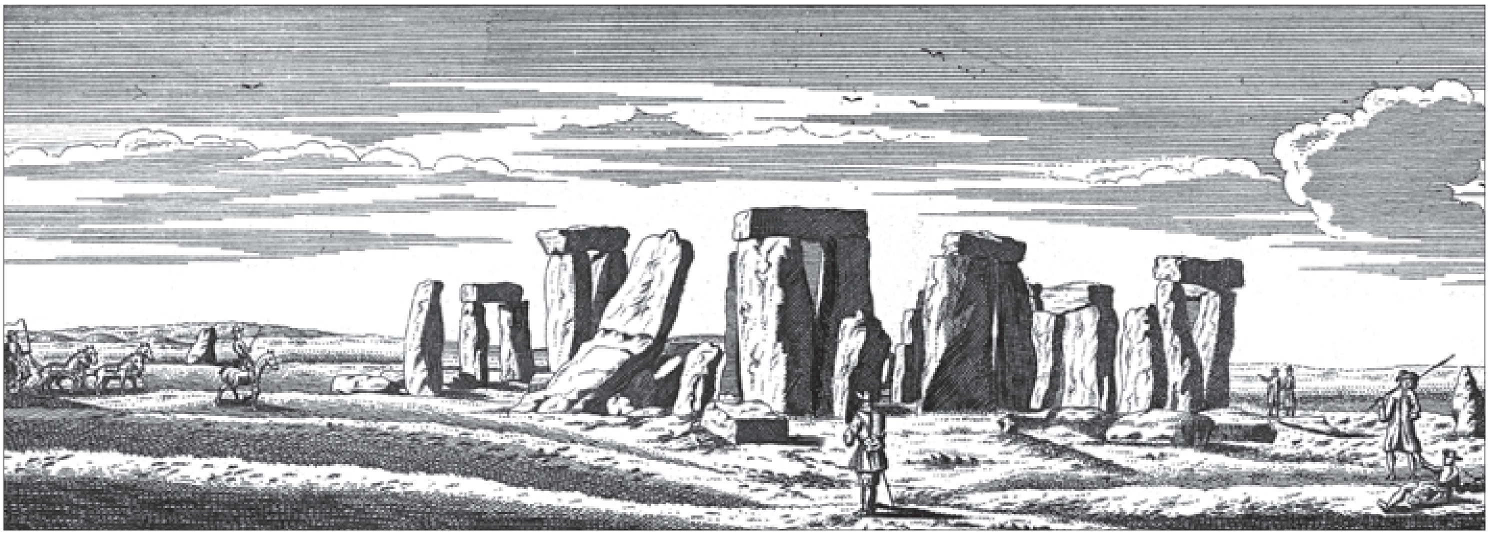
Hotel: A 19th-century Jacobean-style mansion, Matfen Hall is a fine country house hotel offering excellent service. It has large, well equipped bedrooms, a variety of Victorian and contemporary public spaces, a very good restaurant, two bars for informal meals, spa facilities, a garden and an extensive landscaped park (now a golf course).

How strenuous? Please read the last two paragraphs of the introduction above. You should not consider this tour unless you possess a well-used pair of walking boots, are more than averagely fit, have good balance and a head for heights.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

STONEHENGE

& PREHISTORIC WESSEX



Stonehenge, copper engraving c. 1700.

13–18 May 2012 (MY 245)
6 days • £1,340
Lecturer: Julian Richards

Includes many of Europe's finest Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age monuments.

Special out-of-hours visit to Stonehenge (subject to confirmation).

Ranges through Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset, though one hotel throughout.

Features countryside walks of up to four miles to explore the sites in detail.

The span of time between the earliest earthworks at Stonehenge and the final abandonment of the site is approximately equal to that between the abandonment of Britain by the Romans and the launch of the iPad. Time enough, therefore, not only for it to undergo major constructional changes but also for shifts in its use and in the understanding of its purpose.

Beginning in c. 2900 BC with a circular earthwork 300 feet in diameter, in c. 2550 BC it acquired concentric rings of bluestone pillars and soon after the huge sarsen stone structure, so familiar today, was erected. Modifications continued for another thousand years.

The technological achievements beggar belief. The bluestones, with an average weight of four tons, were dragged 150 miles from the west of Wales. The sarsens, weighing up to forty tons, travelled a comparatively modest twenty miles but were placed upright on a plan hundreds of feet in extent within a margin of error of less than 1%. The top of the lintel of thirty giant stones deviated from the horizontal by only six inches; one could go on.

So what was Stonehenge for? We shall never know with any certainty of course. Its layout is carefully aligned with major events in the solar calendar, but it was at times during its long history a place of burial. There is also the fascinating possibility that the bluestones may have been regarded as having healing powers.

Uniquely spectacular and fascinating (and controversial) it may be, but Stonehenge is not alone. It stands amidst one of the world's greatest concentrations of Neolithic and Bronze Age constructions, burial mounds and earthwork enclosures of various shapes and sizes, a vast sacred area of exceptional potency. Study of this broader context is a distinguishing feature of this tour, which also ranges beyond the undulating chalk uplands of Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire into Dorset and Hampshire. A remarkably comprehensive overview of prehistoric Britain is the result.

Walking is an integral part of this tour. It is not possible to dig deeply into the subject without straying far from roads and car parks. On the whole the terrain is fairly easy, steepness being confined to Iron Age hillforts, and while there are about five miles on one day, other days cover a lesser distance on foot.

Itinerary

Day 1: Durrington, Woodhenge, Old Sarum. Leave the hotel by coach at 1.30pm and Salisbury railway station at 2.00pm. Durrington Walls and Woodhenge are contemporary with Stonehenge, one a large earthwork enclosure with traces of massive circular buildings of wood, and the other a sacred site orientated towards the rising midsummer sun. Old Sarum is an Iron Age hillfort, though from AD 1066 to c. 1220 it flourished as a Norman stronghold with castle, palace and cathedral. There are fine views across Salisbury, the city which replaced it.

Day 2: Avebury, West Kennet, Silbury. A day of superlatives, beginning with two early Neolithic structures both dating from around 3600 BC: at Windmill Hill a 20-acre encampment with triple earthwork embankments, and at West Kennet the largest Long Barrow burial chamber in southern England. The henge at Avebury was built around 1000 years later. With huge earthwork banks and ditches a mile in circumference, it is the biggest in Britain, and one of its three circles of standing stones, with 98 megaliths, is Britain's largest. Silbury Hill is, at 37 metres, the highest prehistoric man-made mound in Europe. A special evening opening at the Devizes Museum which has first-rate galleries covering the prehistory of Wiltshire.

Day 3: Hambledon Hill, Down Farm. Overlooking the Vale of Blackmore, Hambledon Hill has a long history of occupation. The early Neolithic enclosures, part defensive, part ceremonial were succeeded in the Iron Age by an impressive fort whose builders sculpted the ramparts with remarkable skill. Martin Green is a farmer and amateur archaeologist whose private museum provides an excellent hands-on study of prehistoric tools.

Day 4: Stonehenge, Salisbury. There are two visits to Stonehenge, one in opening hours and one when closed to the public, allowing close encounter with the stones. The morning is spent walking around the vast sacred landscape of Salisbury Plain where in addition to Stonehenge there are the Avenue, its ceremonial approach, the cursus, a 3 km-long enclosure, and several spectacular cemetaries of Bronze Age round barrows. Return to Salisbury for lunch and in the early afternoon visit the South Wiltshire Museum for its excellent prehistoric displays. There is some free time before leaving for the evening visit (subject to confirmation).

Day 5: Maiden Castle, Maumbury, Dorchester, Cranborne. Maiden Castle in Dorset, a Neolithic enclosure reoccupied and much extended in the 5th cent. BC, is the largest and most sophisticated Iron Age hillfort in Britain. Excavations revealed details of its conquest by Vespasian in AD 43, as shown at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. Nearby Maumbury Rings was in turn a Neolithic henge, a Roman amphitheatre and a Civil War fort. The Ancient Technology Centre at Cranborne fascinatingly reveals much about the way of life in prehistoric times.

Day 6. Danebury, Andover, Silchester. Developed and inhabited from the 7th cent. BC to c. AD 20, Danebury is the most completely investigated hillfort in England, providing a great deal of information about life in the Iron Age. Material from the excavation is excellently displayed in the Museum of the Iron Age in Andover. With the Roman invasion, Prehistory came to an end; the final visit is to Silchester, a rare case of a Roman town becoming completely abandoned with the result that the entire layout is known in detail. Excavations continue. Return to Salisbury railway station and the hotel by 4.30pm (or leave the tour at Basingstoke station c. 3.30pm).

Practicalities

Price: £1,340 (deposit £200). This includes: hotel accommodation as described below; travel by private coach; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water and coffee; admission to sites and museums; tips for waiters, drivers and guides; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £50.**

Hotel: Located a short walk from Salisbury cathedral, the White Hart occupies a 17th-century building. The public areas have been recently refurbished to a high standard and the bedrooms are comfortable and well equipped. There is a restaurant and garden terrace.

How strenuous? Cross-country walking is an integral part of this tour, with between two and five miles each day. The tour would not be suitable for anyone who has any difficulties with every-day walking. Average distance by coach per day: 63 miles.

Memberships. English Heritage members (with cards) will be refunded c. £12.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

NORTH WALES

CASTLES & ARCHAEOLOGY IN SNOWDONIA & ANGLESEY

9–16 July 2012 (MY 307)
8 days • £2,640
Lecturers: Peter Cattermole
& Neil Johnstone

Some of Britain's most beautiful landscapes, highland and lowland.

The finest group of mediaeval castles to be found anywhere, a choice variety of country houses and gardens, historic walled towns.

A geologist joins the tour to explain remarkable and beautiful rock formations. There are three optional walks to pursue this theme further (with an alternative programme for non-geologists).

Industrial archaeology a significant strand, with some of the greatest bridges of the 19th century and fascinating relics of slate mining.

Two superb hotels.

At a meagre 1,085 metres, the highest peak in Wales puts the country towards the bottom of the international league of physical elevation, not far above the Maldives or the Netherlands (or England). So not the least surprising aspect of North Wales is that Snowdon and surrounding ranges look impressively mountainous – magnificently and austerely so. And then there's another surprising feature: only twenty minutes from roads cowering beneath crags and precipitous moorland are others cosetted in lyrical lowland landscapes of green fields, abundant broadleafs and plump livestock.

The variety and beauty of the scenery is matched by the geology which underlies them; in a bid not just to enjoy but to understand the landscapes, a geologist, Peter Cattermole, joins the second half of the tour. This region has some of the most fascinating and famous geology in the British Isles; it is no coincidence that some of the foundations of the scientific study of rocks and the formation of the Earth's crust began here.

Castles provide a further surprise. Not that Conwy, Caernarfon and Harlech are not well known, but first-time visitors are likely to be astonished by their vast magnificence, their immaculate state of preservation and the splendour of their setting. In the 1280s King Edward I of England planted here the finest group of mediaeval castles to be found anywhere, technologically the most developed military architecture of the pre-gunpowder era. Temples to temporal power, they are every bit as fascinating and awe-inspiring as contemporary cathedrals.

Topography, economy and politics were not favourable for the development of country houses of the first rank but there are some treasures in this department – the Rex Whistler mural at Plas Newydd, the Neo-Norman staircase at Penrhyn Castle, the restituted 1640s panelling at Gwydir, the servants' portraits at Erddig. A few gardens, too, have flourished magnificently, Bodnant being one of the finest in Britain.

Neither was topography favourable for travel and transport. All Edward I's castles were built with fortified harbours so they could be sustained by the navy. But in the nineteenth century, politics (the imperative of better communications with Ireland) and the economy (exploitation and export of mineral riches) forced the conquest of rivers, straits and passes. Both Thomas Telford and George Stephenson excelled here with world-beating bridges and viaducts. Industrial archaeology is therefore another strand of the tour, with a particular focus on slate – Welsh slate 'roofed the Industrial Revolution worldwide'.

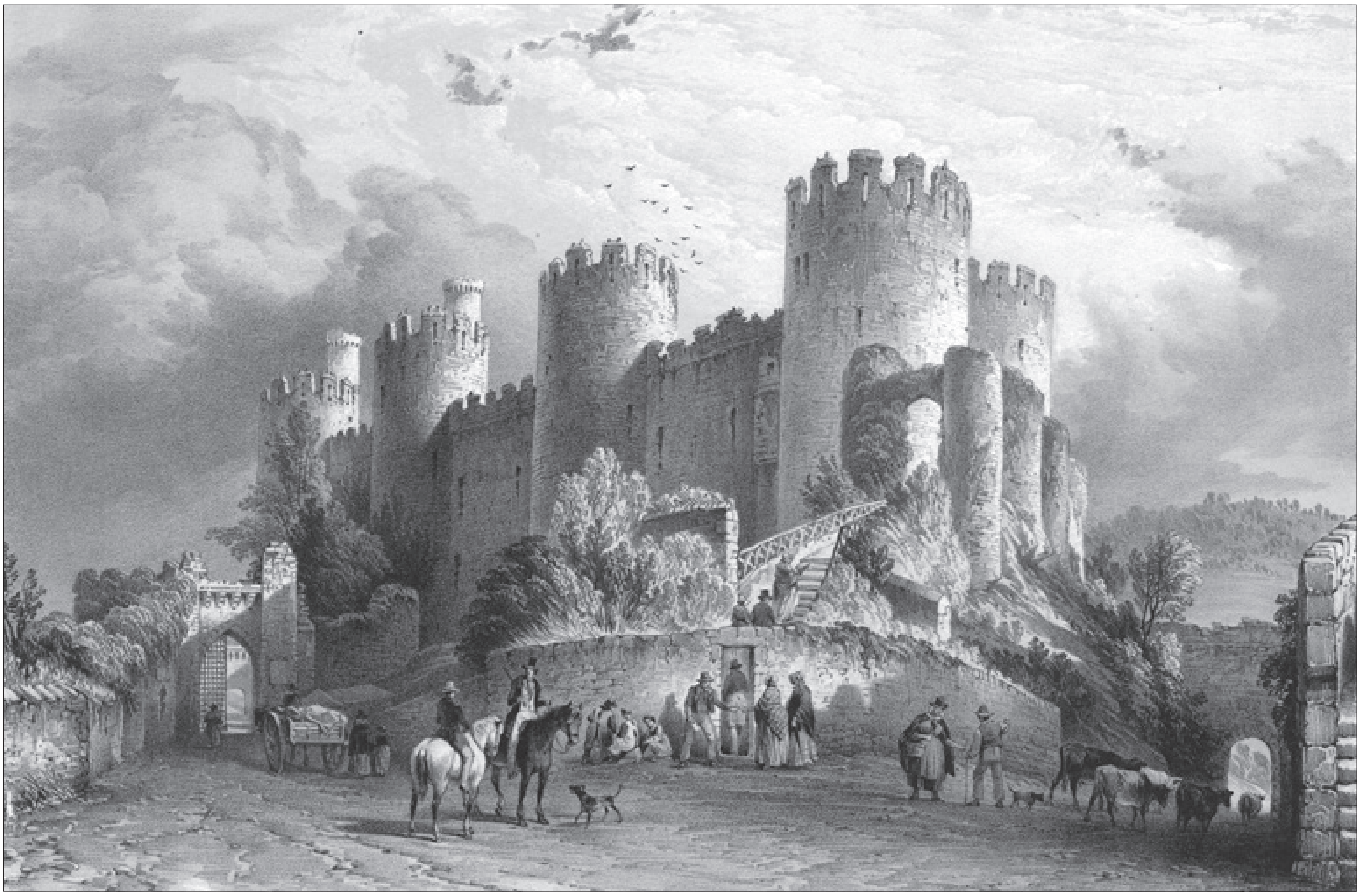
The tour is based at two outstanding hotels which in their different ways are among the most agreeable in Britain.

Itinerary

Day 1: Conwy. The coach leaves Llandudno Junction Railway Station at 2.30pm (having picked up at the Bodysgallen Hall hotel if required). Conwy castle is one of the great achievements of mediaeval military architecture, and its curtain walls and vast cylindrical towers survive intact – as does the wall around the contiguous town, founded for English settlers at the same time (1283). First of three nights at Bodysgallen Hall.

Day 2, Vale of Conwy, Dee Valley, Conwy Valley: Erddig, Pontcysyllte, Rug. The journeys today traverse a variety of delightful lowland and valley landscapes. Erddig is one of the most fascinating and evocative country houses in Britain. Mainly of the early 18th century, it has fine furnishings and artworks, and the servants' quarters are particularly well preserved. Telford's Pontcysyllte Aqueduct carries a canal high above the River Dee, and Rug Chapel preserves an unaltered 17th-century interior. Overnight Bodysgallen Hall.

Day 3: Conwy, Penrhyn, Beaumaris or Penmon. See more of the little historic town of Conwy including Plas Mawr, a well preserved Elizabethan town house. Continue along the coast to enormous Penrhyn Castle, built 1820–35 in neo-Norman style, and one of the most sumptuous houses of its time. Cross the Menai Strait to Anglesey on Telford's suspension bridge (1819–26), another engineering marvel. Then there is a choice between Beaumaris Castle, the most technically perfect of Edward



Conwy Castle, lithograph c. 1840.

I's castles, and the Norman church of Penmon Priory. Overnight Bodysgallen Hall.

Day 4: Bodnant, Llechwedd, Harlech, Portmeirion. Bodnant Garden is one of the finest in Britain, and has an idyllic setting with views of Snowdonia. In the afternoon rise into this range and explore a 19th-century slate mine. Clinging to a crag between the sea and the mountains, Harlech is the most dramatically sited of Edwardian castles. It endured an eight-year siege during the Wars of the Roses. The village of Portmeirion, created by Clough Williams Ellis from the 1920s to the 1960s, is a wholly delectable if eccentric architectural confection. We spend four nights here.

Day 5, Lleyn Peninsula: Uwchmynydd, Criccieth. The largely low lying Lleyn Peninsula has enchanting landscapes with remote fishing communities and tiny fields. At Uwchmynydd, its westernmost tip, are fine exposures of the Mona Complex, a collision zone where massive undersea landslides, ancient pillow lavas and highly contorted rocks of various persuasions are exposed in superb locations. A non-geological alternative includes the Lloyd George Museum at Llanystumdwy, his boyhood home and burial place, and Criccieth Castle, atop a promontory jutting into Tremadog Bay. Overnight Portmeirion.

Day 6, Anglesey: Rhoscolyn, Plas Newydd; Dolbadarn. Return to Anglesey. Rhoscolyn Bay has spectacular geology. Sedimentary rocks were thrust downwards, there to be metamorphosed and deformed into a kilometre-scale antiform (upfold structure) within which are subsidiary antiforms. Plas Newydd, late Georgian home of Marquesses of Anglesey, has Waterloo mementos and a wonderful 1930s Rex Whistler panorama – and, looking across the Strait to Snowdonia, as fine a view as from any house in Britain. On the mainland, stop at Dolbadarn Castle, built for Llywelyn the Great in the 1230s.

Day 7: Caernarfon, Llanberis, Snowdon. Rising above the River Seiont and the Menai Strait, Caernarfon is the greatest of the Edwardian castles. It was built as a seat of government and exhibits features intended to evoke ancient Rome and imperial status. In the afternoon there is a choice: explore the great geological melée that is the valley of Llanberis, which, etched by the ice that covered Wales during the last glaciation, reveals a sequence of ancient marine sediments and subaerial volcanic rocks; or take the cogwheel railway train to the summit of Snowdon, a round trip of 2½ hours. Overnight Portmeirion.

Day 8: Gwydir. Return to the Conwy Valley to visit Gwydir Castle, an enchanting accumulation of 15th, 16th and 17th-century parts which, together with its gardens, is steadily being restored by its current owners. The coach returns to Llandudno Junction by 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,640 (deposit £250). This includes: hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, five dinners and one lunch (with wine, beer, water and coffee); private air-conditioned coach; admission to sites and museums; tips for restaurant staff, drivers, and guides; the services of the lecturers. **Single supplement £200.** Members of the National Trust will be refunded c. £17; members of English Heritage or CADW will be refunded c. £35.

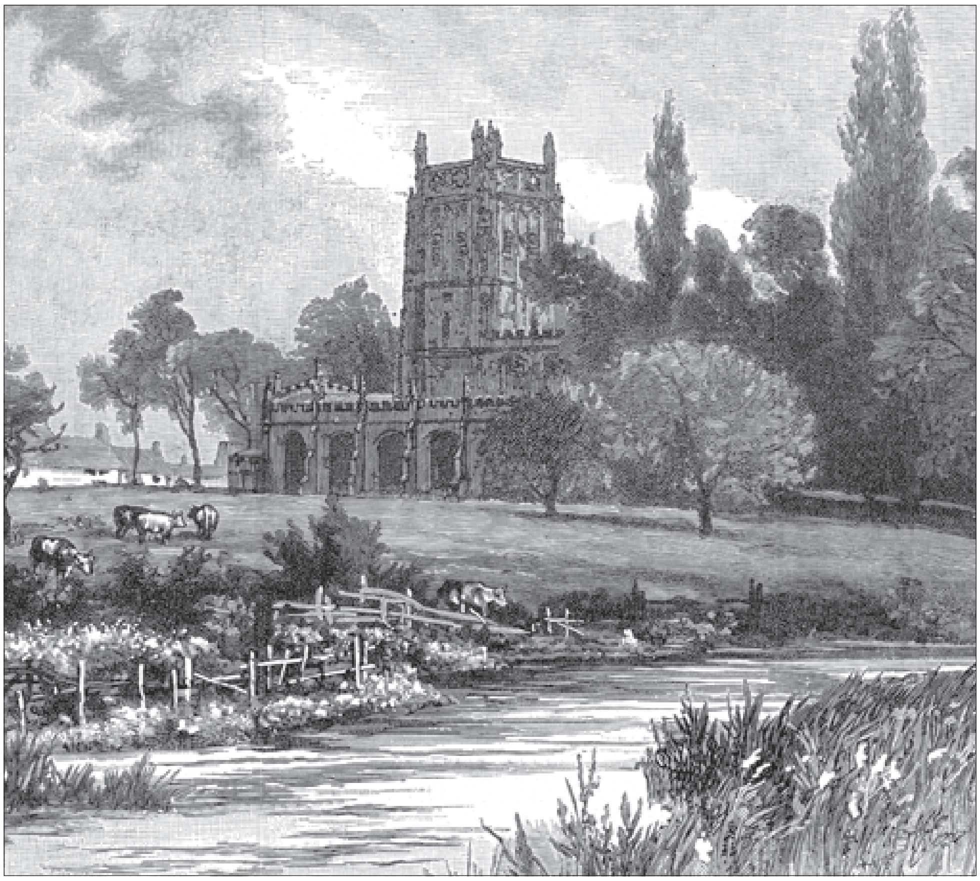
Hotels. Bodysgallen Hall (3 nights) is a 17th-century mansion in 220 acres of grounds and gardens expertly restored in the last thirty years and now belonging to the National Trust. It feels more like a home than a hotel, while providing every modern comfort in impeccable historic surroundings. Rooms vary in size and furnishings, and some are reached through the garden. At Portmeirion (4 nights), rooms are scattered through the idyllic village built by Clough Williams Ellis in the 20th century in a variety of historic, vernacular and original styles. The hillside site enjoys wonderful views over the estuary. Breakfasts and dinners are in the main hotel building by the waterfront. Both hotels have excellent restaurants.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking, some of it uphill, some on rough terrain, some up long flights of steps. To get the best out of the castle visits it is necessary to be able to climb the spiral stairways to the top of the towers. To participate fully on the geological walks you need stout walking boots, though it is possible to opt out of the more strenuous parts of the geological explorations.

Small group: the tour will operate with between 12 and 22 participants.

THE COTSWOLDS

WALKING THROUGH SOME OF THE BEST OF ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE



Fairford, St Mary's, wood engraving 1896 after a drawing by W.H.J. Boot.

21–28 May 2012 (MY 260)
8 days • £2,420
Lecturer: Dr Steven Blake

10–17 September 2012 (MZ 373)
8 days • £2,420
Lecturer: Dr Steven Blake

Nine walks through some of the loveliest countryside in the world with stops to enjoy buildings and landscape features.

A carefully selected itinerary which favours the lesser-visited and less accessible places over some of the more touristy ones.

Several outstanding gardens are a feature, as are manor houses and a handful of the finest parish churches in the country.

One hotel throughout, a 16th-century country house.

The Cotswolds famously encompasses some of the loveliest countryside in England. Loveliness belongs not only to the countryside but also to the buildings that go with it – viscerally pretty villages, farmsteads, manor houses and market towns.

An essential ingredient of the winning formula is the building stone, seemingly 80% honey and 20% lichen, extruded from the hills on which they stand and sculpted by generations of masons who honed their craft with instinctive good taste. The vernacular is timeless and utterly beguiling, though it incorporates some of the grandest and proudest town houses in England. Some could almost have been designed by Andrea Palladio himself – and some practically were, the designs transmitted to Gloucestershire artisans through the innumerable copycat pattern books which buoyed up English provincial building for a couple of centuries.

Parish churches are a particular glory of the Cotswolds. Mostly mediaeval, they range from the diminutive, artless and additive – often blessedly under-restored and un-modernised – to the great churches in the larger villages and towns with soaring arcades, acres of glass, elaborately sculptured tombs and towers and spires to rival any in the country.

Where did the money come from? Wool. Prized as the best in Europe by the Merchant of Prato in the fourteenth century, wool and cloth manufacturing was the basis for solid prosperity from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Revolution – when the water power of the hills and valleys pushed the region to the forefront before the advent of steam power knocked it back again.

Thus the Cotswolds slumbered, ripe for discovery as a rural idyll by the bicycle-mounted aesthetes and romantics of the late Victorian era.

Itinerary

Day 1: Coln Valley. The tour starts at Cheltenham Spa railway station at 2.30pm. Leaving luggage on the coach, walk for five miles following the path of the River Coln, past the picturesque villages of Coln St Dennis and Coln Rogers. Approach Bibury and the hotel on foot, passing Arlington Row, the renowned terrace of cottages that led William Morris to refer to Bibury as the most beautiful village in England.

Day 2: North Cotswolds. A morning visit to the 4,000-year-old Neolithic burial chambers of Belas Knap, the finest long barrow in Gloucestershire, followed by a walk along the Cotswold Way (2 miles) to Sudeley Castle, famous for its honeyed stone and magnificent gardens. After a break for lunch there is another walk (3 miles), through the lovely village of Winchcombe to Hailes, to visit the ruins of a 13th-century Cistercian abbey and a Romanesque church with wall paintings.

Day 3: Central Cotswolds. Beginning and ending in Sapperton, walk (5 miles) through undulating woodland and pasture, with periodic open vistas. Pass a number of buildings in the Arts and Crafts style. Cirencester is a flourishing market town with modern metropolitan businesses amidst streets with many 17th- and 18th-century delights. The soaring magnificence of St John the Baptist is of cathedral-like proportions. Return for a while to Bibury before driving to Quenington for a late afternoon exploration of the village, followed by dinner at a private manor house.

Day 4: Stanway and Snowshill. Visit St Peter's church at Stanway, primarily built in the 12th century. Walk from Stanway to Stumps Cross (2 miles). Lunch at a local pub. Walk uphill from Stanton to Snowshill (3 miles). Snowshill Manor is an enchanting late 17th-century house with beautiful gardens, and contains an eccentric collection of unusual craft objects.

Day 5: Southern Cotswolds. Rodmarton Manor is a supreme example of the Arts and Crafts tradition, having been built and furnished entirely by local craftsmen. Drive to Westonbirt Arboretum, a feast for the eyes regardless of season, whether the wildflowers in early summer or the natural fireworks of autumn. There follows a special visit to the gardens at Highgrove, the country house of the Prince of Wales – *to be confirmed.*

Day 6: Chipping Campden. Walk to Chipping Campden from Dover's Hill (1 mile), enjoying spectacular views over the escarpment. Possibly the most beautiful of all Cotswold towns, it is a gilded masterpiece of limestone and craftsmanship and home to one of the very finest wool churches in the area. Walk to Hidcote Manor Gardens (4 miles), an Arts and Crafts gem and one of the most inventive and influential gardens of the 20th century.

Day 7: the Eastleaches, Fairford. Visit the parish churches of Eastleach Turville and Eastleach Martin before a walk further exploring the area (2 miles). The magnificent Perpendicular St Mary at Fairford is Britain's only parish church with a complete set of mediaeval stained glass windows, and of the highest quality too. In the afternoon, walk in Lodge Park, a Cotswold estate containing a rare 17th-century grandstand surrounded by water meadows.

Day 8: Painswick. Situated in a hidden six acre Cotswold valley, the flamboyant Rococo garden is the only compete survivor from the brief 18th-century period of English Rococo Garden design. The coach returns to Cheltenham Spa railway station by 4.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,420 (deposit £250). This includes: accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; private coach throughout; admissions; all tips; the services of the lecturer and local experts. **Single supplement £330**.

Hotel: Bibury Court Hotel is a Grade I listed 16th-century country house. The rooms vary in size, and the decor of the whole hotel has been recently refurbished. The service is friendly, and prides itself on quirky, individual touches.

How strenuous? This tour should only be considered by those who are used to regular country walking, with some uphill content. The paths are usually on grassy tracks or through woodland, combined with some paved road. Climbing and crossing stiles are a regular feature on these paths. Strong knees are essential, as are a pair of well-worn hiking boots with good ankle support. There are nine walks of between 1 and 6 miles. Average distance by coach per day: 42 miles.

Membership. National Trust: members (with cards) will be refunded c. £25. Current annual membership (2011) is £50.50 or £83.50 for a couple.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

Cathedrals of England

September 2012

Details will be available in December 2011. Contact us to register interest.

West Country Gardens

June 2012

Details will be available in October 2011. Contact us to register interest.

Grampian Gardens

August 2012

Details will be available in October 2011. Contact us to register interest.

York at Christmas

December 2011

Details will be available in September 2011. Contact us to register interest.

Country House Opera

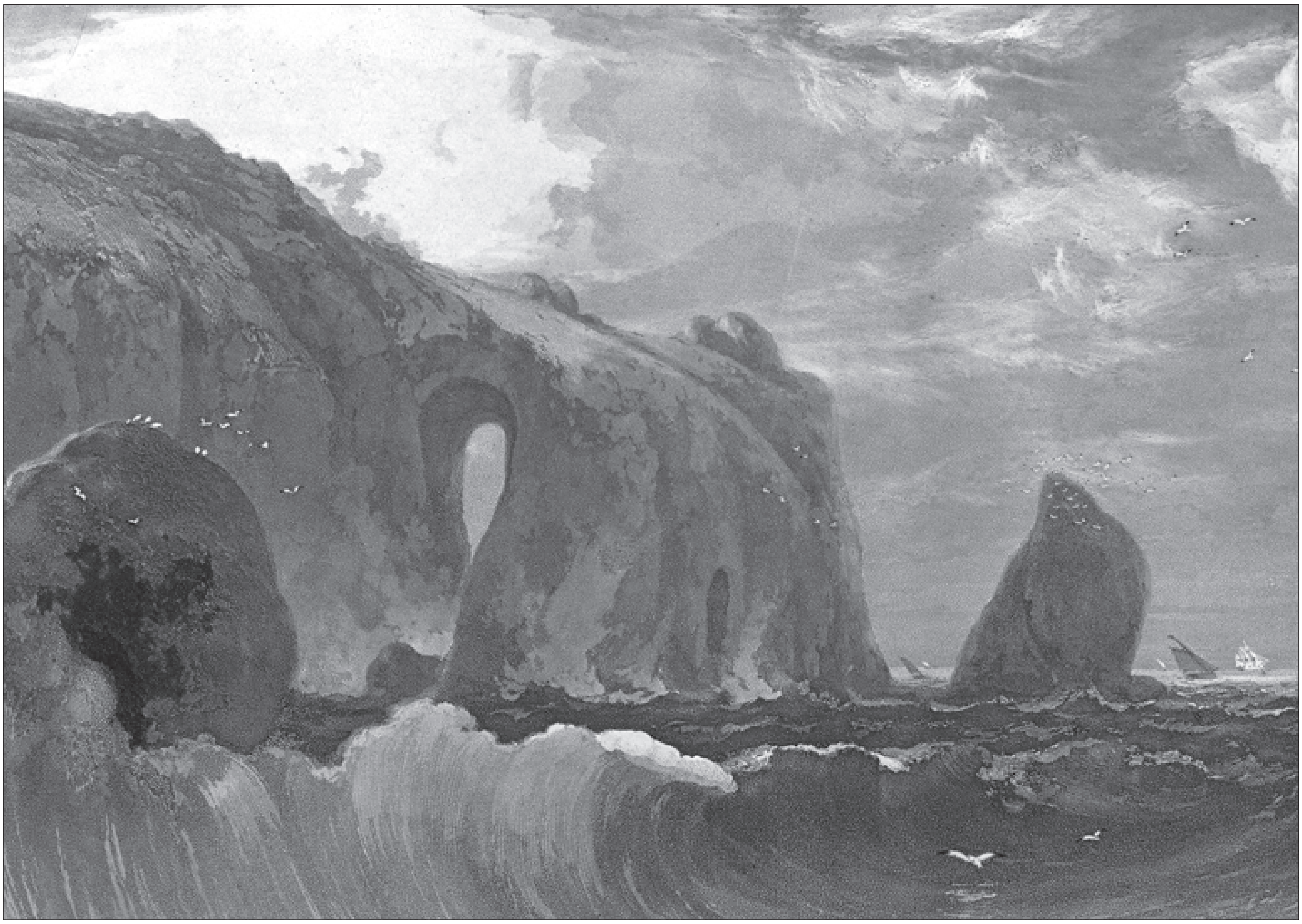
Longborough Festival, Garsington at Wormsley, Grange Park

June 2012

Details will be available in January 2012. Contact us to register interest.

WALKING IN CORNWALL

A LAND BEYOND ENGLAND: HISTORY, ART & LANDSCAPES



Cornish coast, aquatint 1814 by William Daniel.

23–30 May 2012 (MY 247)
8 days • £2,280
Lecturer: Dr Michael Kent

Walks on most days through some of the most beautiful scenery in England.

Visits to gardens, country houses, art galleries, and historic towns and villages. Maritime history, literary associations and the history of the county feature.

Attention is also paid to geology, botany, ecology and other aspects of the natural world.

Other ingredients include charming hotels and some of the best of modern British food.

Cornwall is a land beyond England, in Simon Jenkins's happily ambiguous phrase. First, prosaically, it protrudes: with a coastal path of 300 miles and with no village more than 16 miles from the sea, the Cornish peninsula extends mainland England far to the south and west. Second, in some less definable way, it feels palpably distinct. Much of the landscape and streetscape is unmistakeably and intensely English, but equally unmistakeable is a pervasive all-enveloping Cornishness.

The physical reality of slate and granite gave rise to tough economic realities; except at the height of the Industrial Revolution, Cornwall has usually been among the least prosperous parts of the country, mining and fishing and marginal farming providing hard ways to earn a living. Redolent of struggle and privation, the county provides a less luxuriant version of the traditional English scene – reminiscent in many ways of the England of a generation or two ago.

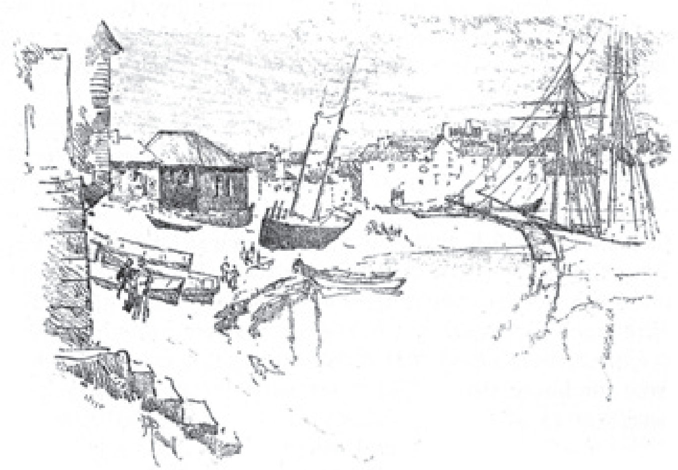
There are moorland and coastal landscapes of rugged beauty, but also vistas of heart-stopping charm. There are dramatic cliffs, becalmed valleys with patchwork emerald fields, fecund gardens in sub-tropical microclimates, dour yet impossibly pretty fishing villages and architectural gems among country mansions and proud little towns.

With seven coastal and country walks of between two and seven miles this certainly merits the description 'walking tour', but that's only half the story. On average, over half the active part of the day is *not* spent walking: the usual MRT activities of looking and learning fill up the rest of the time. The lecturer is a marine biologist, though as a Cornishman who writes on a range of subjects he is an ideal companion for this wide-ranging tour. We also bring in local experts to enlarge on specialist areas.

Cornwall's maritime heritage is a major theme of the tour. Gardens are another thread, a southerly latitude and the Gulf Stream conspiring to ensure that exotic flowering shrubs flourish. Archaeology, architecture, country houses, the vernacular architecture of town and village and the many literary associations also feature prominently.

Cornwall has a special place in the history of British art. Drawn by scenic beauty, rural simplicity, the drama of the sea and the special quality of light, artists have come to live and work here from the 1880s to the present day. The fishing villages of Newlyn and Falmouth were at first the most important colonies, but in the twentieth century St Ives became a significant outpost of the avant-garde. Bernard Leach, Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Patrick Heron and Terry Frost are among the artists who settled here.

We have striven to include a representative sample of each category, which usually includes the best, while avoiding those spots excessively clotted by trippers. The walks have been selected from among many we tried and tested.



St Ives, engraving 1900 after a drawing by Joseph Pennell.

Itinerary

Day 1: Lanhydrock. The tour starts at Bodmin Parkway railway station at 2.00pm. Leaving luggage on the coach, walk for two miles along a track and an avenue of beech and sycamore which leads to Lanhydrock House. A fine Jacobean mansion surrounded by gardens, park and landscape, the opulent interiors display the entire spectrum of life in a top-end Victorian household. Drive to the little port of Fowey for the first of two nights.

Day 2: Fowey, Eden Project. Topped and tailed with ferry crossings, the morning walk begins with views back across the estuary to Fowey and continues with a secluded wooded river valley, delightful undulating farmland, a soaring mediaeval church and the splendid cliffs of Lantic Bay (5¾ miles). Stay in Fowey for the afternoon – literary assocications include Dahne du Maurier – or visit the Eden Project, a botanical paradise in a reclaimed claypit famous for its terraces and geodesic biospheres. Overnight Fowey.

Day 3: St Mawes, Roseland. Walk around the Roseland Peninsula, one of Cornwall's most delectable places: remote and rural, gently undulating pasture and mature trees, breathtaking coastal scenery and views across the Carrick Roads to Falmouth (4 miles). Visit St Mawes Castle, one of Henry VIII's chain of coastal fortresses, small, beautifully designed and excellently preserved. The gardens at Trewithen are internationally known for rhododendrons and magnolias and other exotic and rare flowering shrubs. Overnight Fowey.

Day 4: Falmouth, Helford. Walk through the lovely estuary scenery of Helford and Gillan Creeks (5 miles). Mud flats with abundant bird life, woods and wild flowers, two picturesque villages with notable mediaeval churches. Falmouth was important for long-distance trade, the packet mail service and the Royal Navy. Its architecturally fascinating main axis cranks along the irregular line of the waterfront, with the striking new branch of the National Maritime Museum at one end and the Art Gallery at the other. Overnight Fowey.

Day 5: Pencarrow, Pentire Point. Pencarrow has been the home of the Molesworth-St Auybn family for 500 years; the current house is Georgian, delightful inside and out and with fine gardens. The afternoon walk begins on the Rumps Point, continues to Pentire Point and descends to the beaches at Polzeath and Daymar Bay, developed as resorts in the early 20th-century. John Betjeman is buried in the tiny church at Trebetherick (6 miles). Then by ferry from Rock to Padstow and arrive at the hotel on foot. First of three nights in Padstow.

Day 6: St Ives, Gurnard's Head. A granite knot of narrow streets, the fishing village of St Ives became an important outpost of 20th-century British art. The Hepworth Museum, Barbara's home and garden, packed with her sculptures, is superb; there is art at Tate St Ives (1993), the Leach Pottery, St Ives Society of Artists and many commercial galleries. In the mid afternoon drive to Zennor and walk 3½ miles from there to Gurnard's Head, one of the most spectacular sections of the coastal path. Dinner here before the drive back to Padstow.

Day 7: Padstow, Bodmin Moor churches. Sheltered in the benign Camel Estuary, the picturesque little fishing port of Padstow has for long attracted visitors, the allure recently enhanced by Rick Stein's restaurants. Overlooking the town, Prideaux Place is a gorgeous manor house, Elizabethan and Strawberry-Hill Gothic, still a private home *(visit subject to confirmation)*. There is an excursion across Bodmin Moor to visit churches at Altarnun (excellent late mediaeval furnishings), Blisland (Norman with a fine Victorian interior) and St Neot (set of stained glass windows). Overnight Padstow.

Day 8: Boscastle. The fascinating geological formations and unfolding vistas over sea and farmland make the clifftop walk from Crackington Haven to Boscastle one of the most glorious in Cornwall (6¾ miles). It is also the toughest of this tour; an alternative is through fields and woods down the valley of the Valency, visiting the church of St Juliot which Thomas Hardy restored and where he married. The parties regroup at Boscastle, an enchanting tiny port. The coach returns to Bodmin Parkway by 3.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,280 (deposit £250). This includes: accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 6 dinners with wine, water and coffee; private coach throughout and ferry crossings; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; the services of the lecturer and local experts. **Single supplement £360.**

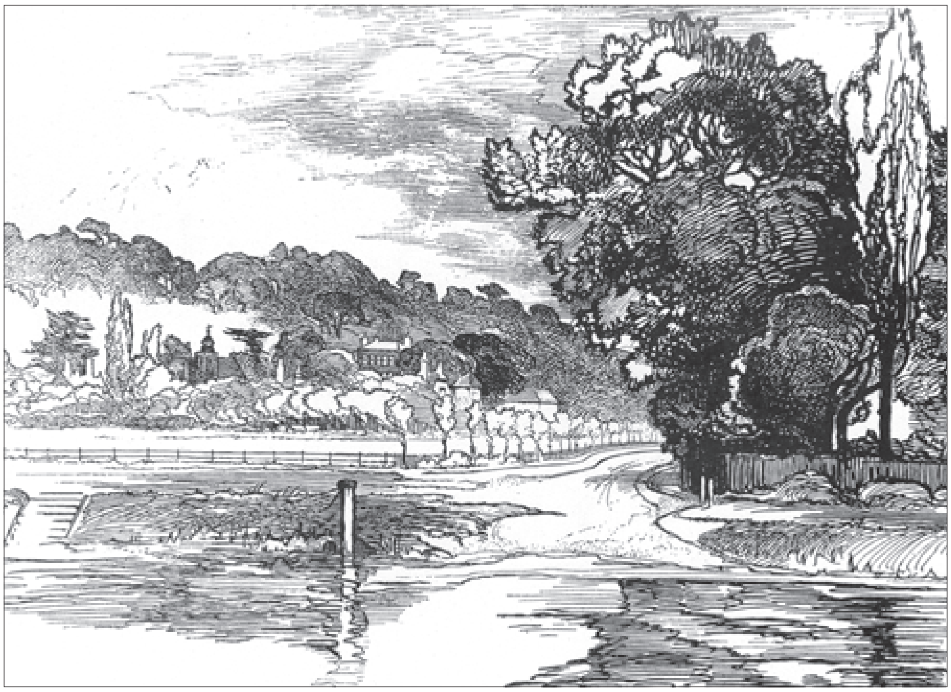
Hotels. In Fowey (4 nights): the Fowey Hotel (AA 4 stars), a Victorian mansion overlooking the estuary. Decor is old fashioned but rooms are comfortable and service is excellent. All rooms have estuary views. In Padstow (3 nights): we occupy the rooms above Rick Stein's Seafood Restaurant. They vary in size and outlook, but throughout decor is fresh and modern and the service is excellent.

How strenuous? This tour should only be considered by those who are used to regular country walking, with some uphill content. Strong knees and ankles are essential, as are a pair of well-worn hiking boots with good ankle support. Walks have been selected to exclude the toughest section of the coastal path but some steep rises and falls are unavoidable. There are seven walks of between 2 and 7 miles. Average distance by coach per day: 43 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

WALKING THE THAMES VALLEY

THE LESS-VISITED TOWNS, VILLAGES, BUILDINGS AND ANTIQUITIES



Petersham from the Middlesex shore, after a drawing by C.G. Harper in *Thames Valley Villages*, 1910.

17–24 September 2012 (MZ 379)
8 days • £2,380
Lecturer: Dr Paul Atterbury

A new tour for 2012.

Walk between two and six miles a day along stretches of the towpath between Richmond and the source of the Thames, and through the gentle hills which flank the valley.

Visit villages, churches, country houses, gardens, historic bridges and other significant buildings and cultural manifestations.

Stay in two country house hotels.

Can be combined with *The Divine Office*: *a Choral Festival in Oxford* (see page 193).

'The Thames is no ordinary waterway. It is the golden thread of our nation's history.' It is not to disparage Churchill's irresistably orotund metaphor to assert nevertheless that, by comparison with the other great rivers of the world, the Thames is puny. But therein lies its enchantment.

While in its lower reaches the river passed through what was for a couple of centuries the largest city in the world and host to its largest port, above the tidal limit at Teddington it was too narrow, too shallow and too meandering to contribute much to the industrial or commercial might of Britain in the early modern era. A vital channel of communication when oars and poles were the locomotive forces – not least to transport rulers and courtiers to their country retreats upstream of the capital – for much of its length the Thames is now a bucolic backwater.

This tour selects the most attractive stretches of the river to walk along, but it does not follow a linear journey from one end to the other. While resorting regularly to the towpath (now a designated long-distance trail, the Thames Path), it also ranges through varied countryside and gentle hills up to a dozen miles away, and includes a representative spread of the best of the buildings, artefacts and art in the region.

As much as anything, this tour is an exploration of the English village. The numerous examples are as well-preserved as they are various. Parish churches and Iron Age forts, manor houses and major mansions, rapturous gardens and leafy churchyards, mediaeval, classical and railway-era bridges, associations with artists and writers, and of course quintessential riverine landscapes: these are chief among the attractions of the tour.

It begins at the edge of London but thereafter omits the larger towns and the more frequented sights. As a travel writer put it in 1910, 'You cannot rusticate at Reading'. Even Oxford is by-passed; to cram the city into an afternoon would be cruel, and besides, the timing of this tour allows participants to segue into *The Divine Office,* our five-day festival of music in college chapels.

Itinerary

Day 1: Hampton, Ham, Richmond. Leave central London by coach at 11.00am for Kingston and walk from here through the park and gardens to Hampton Court for lunch (as at Windsor tomorrow, we do not enter the palace; you've probably been before). Then there is a riverside walk from Ham to Richmond, stopping at Ham House to see some wonderfully preserved 17th-century interiors. Cross Petersham Meadows and walk up through an oak wood to the top of Richmond Hill and look back on the famous view of the Thames, inspiration for countless poets and painters. Total walk: c.3 miles. First of four nights at Danesfield House Hotel.

Day 2: Maidenhead, Eton, Henley. Walk c.6 miles from Maidenhead to Eton. Pass Brunel's railway bridge of 1838 (the widest and flattest brick arches in the world) and highly salubrious suburbia and into open countryside, shaded by trees. The impressive profile of Windsor, largest and oldest inhabited castle in Europe, looms ever larger. Tour the buildings of Eton College (founded 1440) before driving to Henley-on-Thames to see the River and Rowing Museum. Overnight Danesfield House.

Day 3. Marlow, Cookham, Windsor. Walk from the hotel into beech woods on an escarpment of the Chiltern Hills, through farmland and down to Marlow, a pretty if busy little town with a rare early suspension bridge (William Adam 1838). By coach to Cookham, life-long home of painter Stanley Spencer (1891–1959); there is a gallery of his work and a fine parish church. In the afternoon walk through Windsor Great Park and attend evensong with choristers of the Chapel Royal at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. Total walk: c.4 miles Overnight Danesfield.

Day 4: Shillingford, Wittenham Clumps, Dorchester, Ewelme. Begin at the river at Shillingford and then walk up to Wittenham Clumps, a pair of hillocks with views over a particularly attractive stretch of the Thames Valley. Descend through woods and cross farmland, passing an Iron Age fort, to Dorchester-on-Thames. Total walk: c.4.5miles. Visit the abbey church here, one of the finest mediaeval buildings in Oxfordshire, and Ewelme, a unique complex of 15th-century church, almshouses and school, all still functioning. Overnight Danesfield House.

Day 5: Steventon, Sutton Courtenay, Buscot Park. Steventon has a mile-long raised path of mediaeval origin and a number of early half-timber houses. Sutton Courtenay has many fine buildings, and Herbert Asquith and George Orwell are buried here. A 1.5 mile walk passes a stone bridge, a canalised stretch of the Thames and a series of little wooded islands. Drive to Buscot Park, a Palladian mansion with paintings by Burne Jones and outstanding gardens. First of three nights at the Bibury Court Hotel.

Day 6: Buscot, Kelmscott, Bibury. Begin the walk at Buscot, whose church has a Burne Jones window, and continue c.2.5miles beside the Thames, which is now windy and very rural. Visit Kelmscott Manor, the Tudor house acquired by William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts movement. In the afternoon drive back to Bibury for free time there, or an optional 3 mile walk through the Coln Valley finishing at the hotel. Overnight Bibury.

Day 7: Great Coxwell, Uffington, Lechlade. Visit the 13th-century monastic barn at Great Coxwell, a marvel of mediaeval carpentry. The morning walk (c.3.5 miles) is along a stretch of the Ridgeway Path, a route of prehistoric origins along the North Wessex Downs with panoramic views. See the monumental Uffington White Horse, the only genuinely ancient such chalk image in Britain. Lechlade-on-Thames is a vibrant small town with a fine Gothic church and a handsome bridge. Walk c. 3 miles along the river and to Inglesham church, a favourite of William Morris. Overnight Bibury.

Day 8: Thames Head, Kingston Bagpuize. At last, the source. A soaring rockface, a majestic spurt: an awesome spectacle. Actually, no. A damp patch, the trickle varying with yesterday's weather, reached by walking across three fields. Drive to Kingston Bagpuize for a private visit and lunch at this delightful little Baroque mansion. Drive via Oxford (where *Divine Office* participants are set down) to London, arriving by 4.30pm.

Practicalities

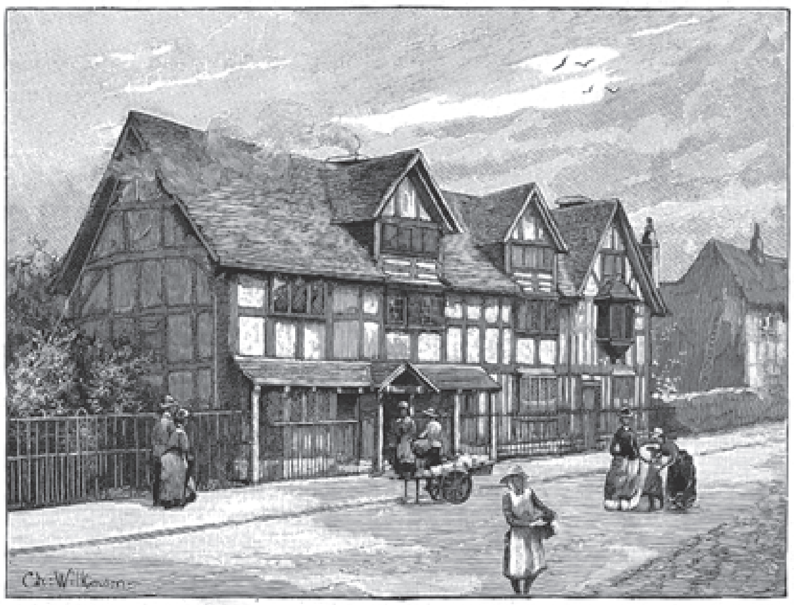
Price: £2,380 (deposit £250). This includes: accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, water, coffee; transport by private coach; all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; the services of the lecturer and the tour manager. **Single supplement £380**.

Hotels. Between Marlow and Henley, Danesfield House (4 nights): a Tudor-style country house of 1899 on a hill overlooking the Thames. Very comfortable, two restaurants, good service, fine gardens. At Bibury (3 nights): Bibury Court Hotel, a 16th-century country house. Rooms (which vary in size) have been recently refurbished, service is friendly.

How strenuous? There are 7 walks of between 2 and 6 miles, usually on flat and well-trodden grassy paths or tracks through woodland, combined with some paved roads and towpaths. Some walks include ascent and descent, climbing over stiles and on day 4, a climb of 230 feet up to Wittenham Clumps. You should be accustomed to countryside walking and prepared for the (sometimes inclement) British weather. Average daily mileage by coach: 40 miles.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

SHAKESPEARE & HIS WORLD



Shakespeare's house in Stratford, wood engraving 1897.

Summer 2012
Lecturer: Charles Nicholl

Details will be available in early 2012. Contact us to register your interest now.

There are two aspects to this tour, the plays and the places. With five Shakespeare productions it provides an incredibly rich theatrical experience, while visits to sites associated with the playwright form a springboard for a study of the topographical and historical context in which the plays were written.

In this initial publicity it is too early to give details of the plays or even the dates, but we are confident that across the six or seven nights of the tour at least five first-rate productions can be found, in Stratford and in London. The Royal Shakespeare Company will probably account for two or three productions, and one or two will be at the replica Globe, whose track record since it opened in 1997 has been dazzling. For 2011 we succeeded in stringing together six first-rate productions on successive evenings including a performance at The Old Vic and hope to be able to do so again.

Examination of sites in Stratford and London is not just an end in itself, though some of them are fascinating, beautiful and moving. Rather, it is a powerful aid to coming closer to Shakespeare the man and the writer and to learning about the age which shaped him, his plays and poems. Like Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*, he was 'a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles', and his observations of the quotidian and the banal characterise his work as much as the grand affairs of state or the revelation of the human condition.

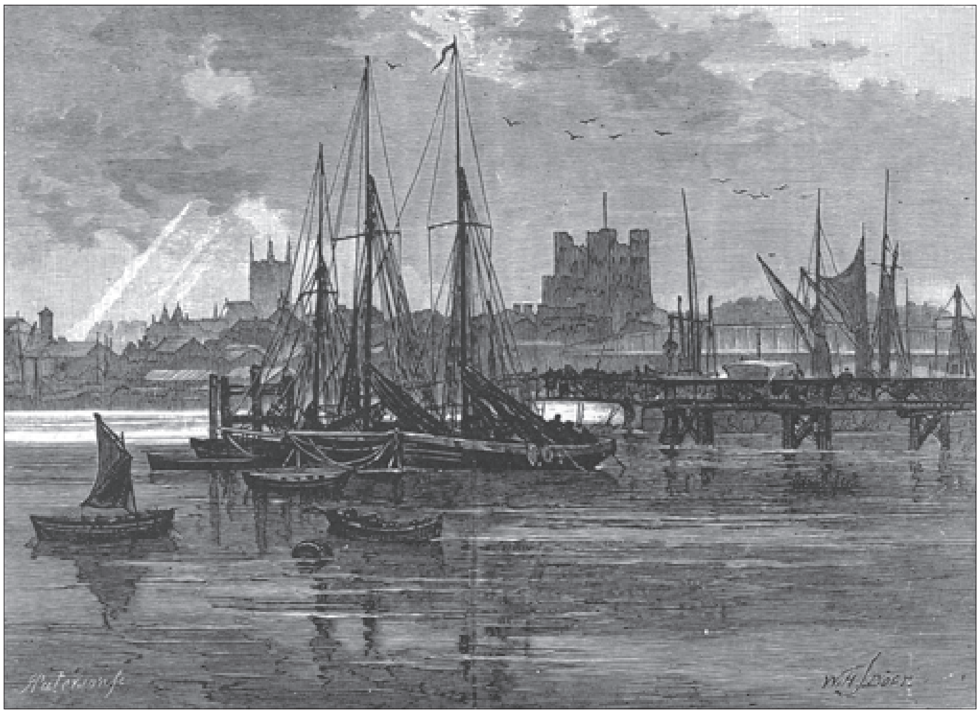
London was where Shakespeare pursued his second career as an actor and playwright, acquired fame, achieved social advancement and made his fortune. But Stratford-upon-Avon, his birthplace, remained his home. When he headed for the metropolis aged around 23 his wife, three children, parents and siblings remained behind, and he returned to them regularly. In London he was only a lodger; he bought the biggest house in Stratford aged 33, and when he died there at the age of 52 he had probably been retired from the London stage for three or four years.

Fortune has been kind to the fabric of Shakespearean Stratford, less so to his London. But London retains patches of street pattern he would recognise, and there are sufficient physical remains and identifiable sites, including four Elizabethan theatres, for an exploration to be very rewarding.

The lecturer, Charles Nicholl, is author of *The Lodger,* acclaimed for bringing the reader as close to Shakespeare as any historical study. He will give talks about each play and lead the walks and visits. Some of these will be to places not normally accessible or outside their normal opening hours. Meetings with actors or directors may also be arranged.

CHARLES DICKENS

IN HIS BICENTENARY



Rochester from the river, engraving 1896 after a drawing by W.H.J. Boot.

31 March–4 April 2012 (MY 196)
5 days • £1,880
Lecturer: Professor Michael Slater

A new tour for 2012.

Accompanied by leading Dickens expert and noted public reader of Dickens's work.

Talks and readings by the lecturer throughout the tour.

Stay in central London, on the seafront in Portsmouth and Broadstairs.

A Charles Dickens tour makes perfect sense in that Dickens was very much a peripatetic, restless man with a particularly acute sense of place and a superlative skill in depicting places in his writings, a skill he once described as being akin to that of a 'fanciful photographer'. It is thus particularly rewarding to explore the settings, both urban and rural, for his great novels, especially, of course, relevant areas of London (his knowledge of the city was described as being already 'wonderful' by one of his fellow clerks in the lawyer's office where he began earning his living at the age of fifteen). His love/hate relationship with the great city and the myriad, often sensational, contrasts it offered lasted the whole of his life and is central to all his work. At night the streets of London were for him what he called 'a great magic lantern' into which he needed to be able to look and he found it a struggle to write when deprived of this unfailing resource.

The tour begins with a visit to the Charles Dickens Museum in Doughty Street, Dickens's only surviving London residence occupied by him during the crucial years 1837–1839 when he was rocketing to fame with the serial publication of *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. We later travel to Portsmouth to visit Dickens's birthplace, now a museum and also his father's workplace, the Navy Pay Office in the historic Dockyard. Back in London we explore the legal quarter around Lincoln's Inn, one of the chief settings for *Bleak House*. Lunch is at one of Dickens's clubs, the Athenaeum, scene of his memorable reconciliation with Thackeray after many years of estrangement.

The north Kent marshes are the scene of Pip's fateful encounter with the escaped convict in *Great Expectations*, and eventually into the ancient cathedral town of Rochester. This picturesque old city, called by Dickens's friend, John Forster, 'the birthplace of his fancy', was the setting for his happy childhood, fated to come to an abrupt end when John Dickens was posted back to London in 1822. Another beneficent place for Dickens featured on the tour is the attractive little seaside resort of Broadstairs where he and his family regularly holidayed between 1837 and 1851 and which he immortalised in a delightful essay called 'Our English Watering Place'.

As the tour begins with Dickens's first London home, the 'first class family mansion' he was so delighted to lease in 1837, so it ends with the only home he ever owned, his 'little Kentish freehold' as he called Gad's Hill Place, near Higham in Kent. This was his home for the last ten years of his life, the place where he wrote his last three novels, the last being the tantalisingly unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Itinerary

Day 1: London and Portsmouth. Assemble at the hotel on Gower Street at 10.30am. Passing Tavistock Square, the site of Dickens' last London home and the site of the Foundling Hospital, walk to the Charles Dickens Museum. Housed in 48 Doughty Street, Dickens's former home is also the headquarters of The Dickens Fellowship. Visit St Luke's church in Chelsea where Charles and Catherine were married. Drive to Portsmouth. Overnight Portsmouth.

Day 2: Portsmouth and London. Visit the Birthplace Museum in Portsmouth. By a Dickensian coincidence, Dickens's first love, Maria Beadnell, and his last love, Ellen Ternan, are both buried in the Highland Road Cemetery in Portsmouth. Spend time in the historic dockyard and see the Dickens Room in Portsmouth Central Library. Return to London. First of two nights in London.

Day 3: London. A morning '*Bleak House*' walk led by Andrew Sanders, author of *Charles Dickens's London*. Lunch at The Athenaeum Club, by invitation. A private visit to Carlyle House. Thomas Carlyle was a hero of Dickens and his *French Revolution* inspired *A Tale of Two Cities*. Readings from both works. Visit Westminster Abbey where Dickens is buried. Overnight London.

Day 4: Chatham, Rochester and Broadstairs. Leave London for Chatham via the *Great Expectations* country of the Kentish Marshes. In nearby Rochester see Eastgate House, featured in *The Pickwick Papers*, and Restoration House (Satis House in *Great Expectations*). Visit Rochester cathedral which figures so largely in *The mystery of Edwin Drood* and Watts Charity, the setting for Dickens' Christmas story *The Seven Poor Travellers*. Overnight Broadstairs.

Day 5: Broadstairs and London. The Dickens House Museum was originally home to Mary Pearson Strong, allegedly the inspiration for the memorable Betsey Trotwood. En route to London visit Gad's Hill Place. Now a school, Gad's Hill was Dickens's final home which he bought in 1856 after admiring it since childhood. Return to London by 4.00pm.

THE VICTORIAN ACHIEVEMENT

ARCHITECTURE, INDUSTRY & ART IN LANCASHIRE & YORKSHIRE

Practicalities

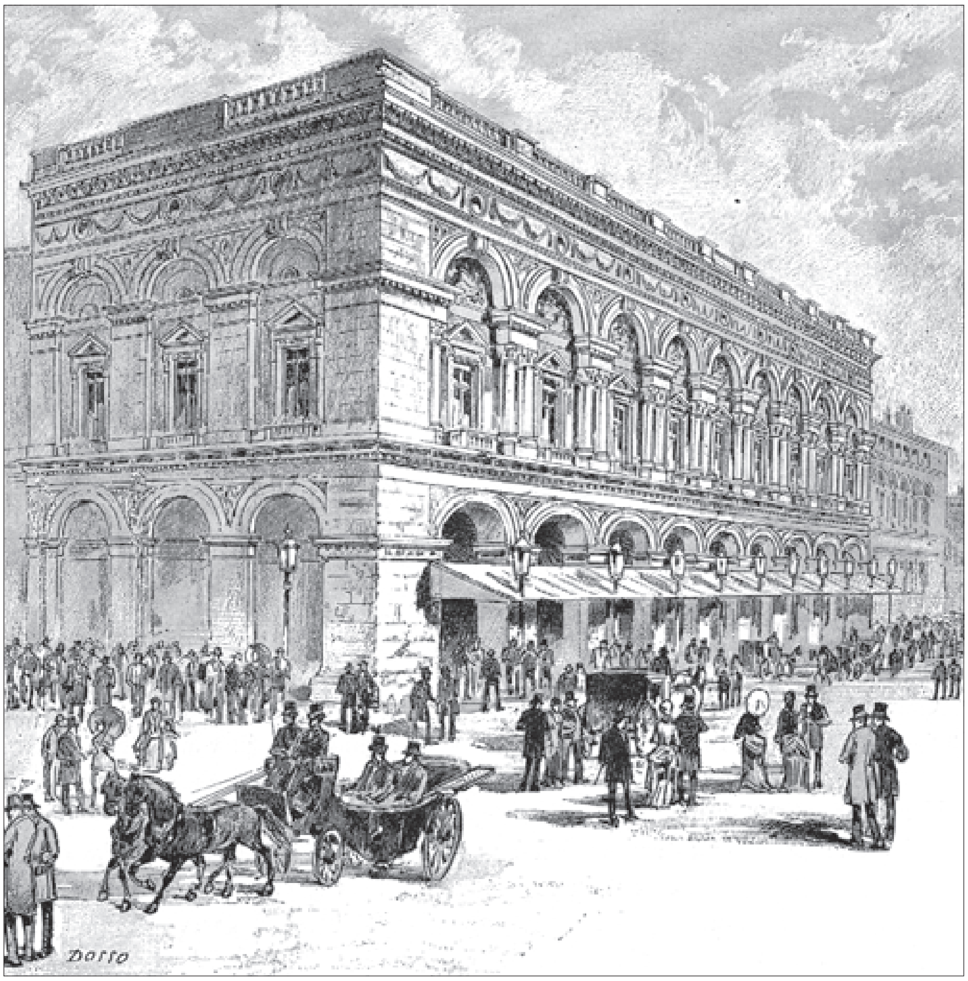
Price: £1,880 (deposit £200).
This includes: travel by luxurious private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, two lunches and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; tips for restaurant staff and drivers; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement: £250. Single supplement with a sea view in Broadstairs: £270.**

Hotels. In Portsmouth (1 night): The Queens Hotel is a three star hotel, the best available in Portsmouth. Public rooms are opulent though bedrooms feel tired and décor is dated. Some rooms have a shower over the bath. In London (2 nights): The Academy Hotel is a four star hotel situated in a quiet street in central London and feels more like a private home. Public rooms are pleasant and there is a garden. Rooms have a traditional décor and baths have a shower over them. There is no restaurant. In Broadstairs (1 night): The Royal Albion Hotel is prominent on the seafront in Broadstairs. Dickens stayed there during some of his numerous trips to the seaside town. Rooms vary in size but all are comfortable and contemporary. Most rooms have a shower over the bath. There is a restaurant, bar and terrace.

How strenuous? This tour has two hotel changes and involves quite a lot of walking and should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 68 miles.

Group size: this tour will run with between 12 and 22 participants.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.



Manchester, Free Trade Hall, engraving 1888.

25 June–2 July 2012 (MY 296)
8 days • £1,850
Lecturer: Christopher Newall

28 August–4 September 2012 (MY 346)
8 days • £1,850
Lecturer: Dr Paul Atterbury

Studies the social history, industrial archaeology, architecture and art of the reign of Queen Victoria, a period when Great Britain led the world in trade, industry and ideas.

Includes some of the most beautiful architecture of the era and immensely impressive works of engineering – canals, railways, bridges.

Painting and sculpture in all its manifold variety features; many of the country's best collections of Victorian art are in the region.

The historical, social and economic context is an important strand of the tour, with attention to the lives of some of the greatest Victorians.

A subsidiary theme is the remarkable post-industrial regeneration of recent years.

Athens, Florence, Manchester: there is no fourth. Another risible Victorian polemic? No. The essence of this proposition concerning the paramount importance of Manchester in the history of civilization remains valid. The impact of the industrial cities of Victorian Britain in shaping the modern world cannot be overestimated.

But the era still needs rescuing from twentieth-century disdain. Ignorance and misunderstanding remain deep and widespread. The truth is that nineteenth-century Britain was one of the most dynamic and innovative societies in history, and that Victorian cities, as the principal material manifestation of that great age – and their post-industrial reincarnation – are among the most fascinating features of the United Kingdom.

In the earlier decades of the century Britain led the world in industrialisation and technology, dominated world trade and became the world's wealthiest nation. It can also be claimed that Britain was a leader in the development of ideas, the extension of education, the practice of philanthropy and social amelioration and the advance (if haltingly) of political reform. Meanwhile the British Empire grew and grew, almost by accident, and became the most extensive the world has ever seen, and the best administered.

London might have been the world's biggest city and the seat of government of the Empire, but the crucible of progress did not lie beside the Thames. The great inventors were mainly from the north, railways were at first a northern phenomenon, and the north was the source of many of the great ideas of the age, free trade among them. The arts, too, particularly architecture, were less Londonocentric than they became subsequently; a very large proportion of the great buildings of Victorian England are in the northern counties. (Liverpool has more listed buildings than any city outside London.)

For variety, vigour, muscularity, ambition, technological boldness, ingenuity, symbolism and, yes, beauty, Victorian architecture has few peers in all history. Much of the interest of this tour lies in the built environment: palatial town halls, Pirenesian warehouses, fabulously embellished churches, noble Philosophical Institutes, mansions for the rich and tenements for the poor. But of no less interest are the stunningly impressive engineering accomplishments – canals, railways, bridges – whether their aesthetic power arises from raw functionalism or historicist adornment.

Victorian painting and sculpture is an important part of the tour; a good proportion of the country's finest collections are in the North West. The best is world-class, the Pre-Raphaelites in particular, but irrespective of artistic merit the art is fascinating for what it reveals of Victorian attitudes and mores as well as for what it purports to depict.

A week's holiday in Manchester, Leeds and Liverpool is an unusual proposition, and this itinerary is probably unique. We might not have risked it a few years ago but recent regeneration has reversed decline and dramatically assisted the transformation to the post-industrial era. As a trio of cities to visit they should be considered to rank with, say, Bologna, Parma and Verona, or Augsburg, Nuremberg and Regensburg: there is as much of artistic and architectural interest to see, and arguably the historical significance is greater.

Itinerary

Day 1: Manchester. Assemble at the Midland Hotel in Manchester and leave at 2.15pm for a walk to see many of the great Victorian buildings which still predominate in the city centre. A palatial manifestation of municipal pride, Alfred Waterhouse's Town Hall (1867–77) is one of the most splendid buildings of the era, an imaginative Gothic design with glorious interiors and murals by Ford Madox Brown. First of two nights in Manchester.

Day 2: Manchester. The industrial landscape of Castlefield encompasses the world's first passenger railway station (1830), the nodal point of England's most important canal network and other monuments of the industrial revolution. The City Art Gallery has a superb collection of Victorian paintings, particularly Pre-Raphaelites. An afternoon by coach includes the soaring beauty of Bodley's St Augustine at Pendlebury. Overnight Manchester.

Day 3: Manchester, Saltaire, Leeds. The John Rylands Library (Basil Champneys) is late Victorian architecture at its most refined. In 1853 Titus Salt consolidated his five cloth factories into one, added a model town and named it Saltaire. It survives intact, a monument to Victorian ameliorism and to 21st-century regeneration. Arriving in Leeds, visit the stupendous Classical town hall (Cuthbert Broderick 1853) and dine in a restaurant under the great oval roof of the Corn Exchange (also Broderick), a masterpiece of Victorian commercial architecture. First of three nights in Leeds.

Day 4: Leeds, Bradford. The industrial heritage of Leeds: a vast 1840s mill, an Egyptian-style mill and factory chimneys imitating mediaeval Italian towers. The retail and commercial district is the most extensive and unspoilt area of Victoriana in Britain, with dazzlingly elaborate arcades and endlessly inventive façades. An afternoon in Bradford (20 minutes by train), source in the 1850s of two-thirds of Britain's woollen cloth. Retaining a mediaeval street pattern on a sloping site, the centre has a magnificent set of Gothic Revival buildings. Overnight Leeds.

Day 5: Leeds. Among the sights today are the 1830s Parish Church, a key monument in the history of the Gothic Revival, an amazing Venetian Gothic warehouse disrupting the Georgian serenity of Park Square and the Municipal Buildings complex with the Art Gallery, Library and Tiled Hall. Free afternoon or an excursion to Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills, once the world's largest woollen mill. Overnight Leeds.

Day 6: Liverpool. By coach from Leeds to Liverpool. The Albert Docks (1843) is one of the most impressive constructions of the century, ruggedly functional but perfectly proportioned. Time for exploration, lunch and a museum or two (Tate Liverpool is here). See other waterside buildings, including the enormous Tobacco Warehouse. To the salubrious suburb of Sefton Park and two fine late Victorian churches, St Agnes (JL Pearson 1883) and St Clare (Leonard Stokes 1899). First of two nights in Liverpool.

Day 7: Liverpool. St George's Hall is but the most magnificent of a group of buildings which is unequalled as a display of potential for variety of classical architecture. Another is the Walker Art Gallery with an outstanding collection of Victorian painting. Explore the architectural riches of the central business district including the former Bank of England (Cockerell 1845) and cast iron Oriel Chambers (1864). Finally Giles Gilbert Scott's Anglican Cathedral, begun in 1904 so not quite Victorian but the superb, sublime culmination of the Gothic Revival. Overnight Liverpool.

Day 8: Port Sunlight. Cross the River Mersey to Port Sunlight, the exceedingly pretty and superbly appointed township started in 1888 for workers at Lord Lever's adjacent soap factory. The Lady Lever Art Gallery is outstanding for English painting of the 18th and 19th centuries with masterpieces by Millais, Leighton, Burne Jones and others. Drive to Manchester, reaching Piccadilly Station by 3.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,850 (deposit £200). This includes: rail travel between Leeds and Bradford (return); coach transfers throughout the tour; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and six dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions and donations for churches, museums and galleries; all tips for drivers and restaurant staff; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £270.**

Hotels. All are excellently located within walking distance of much that is seen on the tour and among the more comfortable hotels in each city. Manchester (2 nights): The Midland, a large elaborately adorned Victorian hotel, recent refurbishment blending something of its original character with modern comforts. Leeds (3 nights): Queen's Hotel is a very comfortable 1930s establishment which has retained Art Deco interiors and offers excellent service. Liverpool (2 nights): in a salubrious area between the cathedrals, the Hope Street Hotel brings good modern design and comforts into a 19th-century factory and adjacent 1960s police station.

How strenuous? This tour would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and who cannot stand for long periods of time. Average distance by coach per day: 17 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

IN CHURCHILL'S FOOTSTEPS

OXFORDSHIRE, LONDON & KENT WITH HIS GRANDDAUGHTER

17–21 October 2011 (MY 106)
This tour is currently full.

16–20 April 2012 (MY 211)
5 days • £2,600
Lecturers: The Hon. Celia Sandys
& Terry Charman

Visits places key to Churchill's life in the company of Sir Winston's granddaughter, Celia Sandys, and Churchill historian, Terry Charman.

Several privileged visits and meetings, some so special they can't be mentioned here.

Two nights in a country house in Oxfordshire where Churchill regularly stayed and two nights in central London.

Winston Churchill and Celia Sandys.

'Winston Churchill was the greatest Englishman and one of the greatest human beings of the twentieth century, indeed of all time.' So Max Hastings began *Finest Years: Churchill as Warlord* (2010). Roy Jenkins concluded his 2001 biography with the verdict that Churchill was 'the greatest human being ever to occupy 10 Downing Street'. These are the views of first rate historians, not of hagiographers or eccentrics, and are shared by millions around the globe.

It has not always been thus. In 1932 a British delegation in Moscow was being questioned by Stalin about contemporary politics. 'What about Churchill?' he asked. 'Oh,' replied Nancy Astor with a scornful little laugh, 'he's finished.' Detractors were legion for much of his political career; some historians have followed suit. *Churchill: a Study in Failure* by Robert Rhodes James caused a storm when it was published in 1970 which did nothing to staunch the revisionist flow (the 2010 contribution is Patrick J. Buchanan's *Churchill, Hitler and the Unnecessary War: How Britain Lost its Empire and the West lost the World*).

Churchill was more right about more things than an average handful of statesmen put together. It is also true that his judgement was intermittently flawed, the consequence of the huge range of matters to which he turned his attention, his exceptionally long political career, his boundless energy, his boldness and his ambition. Anti-Churchill myths are strangely tenacious (no, he didn't order troops against the strikers at Tonypandy), but on most of the major issues of his time not only was his judgement sound but it was frequently in defiance of prevailing wisdom, and often demonstrated almost preternatural foresight.

The use of 'human being' in both the quoted encomia is striking: alternative substantives would seem inadequate for such a towering – and human – personality. Compassion was the virtue he ranked highest, a belief in decency the bedrock of his political life, liberty his goal. Yes, he was possibly the greatest war leader the world has known; but for the quantity and impact of progressive social legislation he shepherded through Parliament he was probably unsurpassed by any other British politician of the twentieth century. He had a will of iron, colossal courage and the intellect of a genius, but he was lovable and approachable, easily moved to tears by the sight of suffering or forbearance. His famous wit was rarely acerbic and never cruel.

This unique tour brings Churchill and his tumultuous times to life through visits to places which played a key role in his life. Some of the arrangements are very special indeed and there will be additional treats not mentioned here.

Itinerary

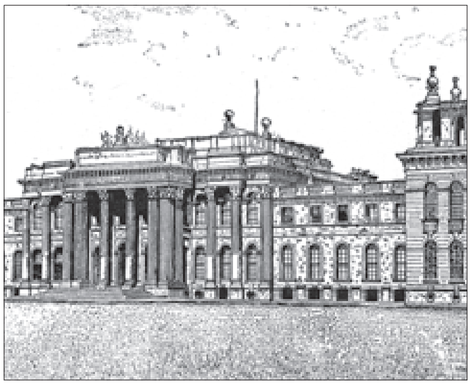
Day 1: London, Harrow. Meet in central London by 9.50am and visit the Churchill Museum in Whitehall, an excellent presentation of his life. Next visit Harrow School, where he spent five years with famously mixed fortunes, and where some special events are being arranged. Continue to Ditchley Park in Oxfordshire, Churchill's secret retreat for 15 weekends 1940–42 when the moon was full (Chequers being feared visible to the Luftwaffe). Built in the 1720s, it is one of the finest country houses of its time. Two nights are spent here.

Day 2: Blenheim, Bladon, Ditchley. Blenheim Palace, Churchill's birthplace, is the grandest house in Britain. It was given by the nation in 1705 to John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough. We have a special out-of-hours visit to the WSC collection and state apartments followed by time to enjoy the gardens and 'Capability' Brown park. Then visit the nearby church at Bladon where WSC was buried (1965). Return to Ditchley for talks and discussions. Second night at Ditchley.

Day 3: Uxbridge, London. The Battle of Britain was controlled from the Operations Rooms at RAF Uxbridge. Here on 16 August 1940 Churchill first said: 'Never have so many owed so much to so few'. Return to London for a walk around Whitehall passing key Churchill sites including the Admiralty, Downing Street, St Margaret's (where he married) and Westminster Abbey (for evensong). There is a private after-hours visit to the once secret Cabinet War Rooms with its director, Phil Reed. Dinner is at the Savoy Hotel in the room where the Other Club, which Churchill founded in 1911, regularly met. First of two nights in London.

Day 4: London. Pass a couple of the houses in London in which WSC lived. The Assembly Hall at Church House was where the Commons sat for most of the war and is where Churchill's great speeches were made. At the House of Commons we have a very special visit courtesy of a Member of Parliament (subject to Parliamentary business). Overnight London.

In Churchill's Footsteps Continued



Blenheim Palace, engraving from 'The English Provinces' 1888.

Day 5: London, Chartwell. On the way to Kent, digress via Sidney Street of 'Siege' fame (1911). Then to Chartwell, his beloved family home in the country from 1924 to the end of his life. 'I love the place – a day away from Chartwell is a day wasted.' The house, studio, gardens and outhouses are maintained as during the Churchill occupancy with photographs, sound recordings and numerous memorabilia. Return to central London by 5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,600 (deposit £250). This includes: travel by luxurious private coach, and maybe by tube or bus in London; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, two lunches and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; tips for restaurant staff and drivers; the services of the lecturers; **Single supplement £350. River view supplement** (London) **£30 per room.**

Accommodation: Oxfordshire (2 nights): built in the 1720s by James Gibbs and William Kent, Ditchley Park is now used for discreet political conferences. Visitors are treated as house guests and are able to take advantage of several drawing rooms and extensive grounds. The bedrooms all have their own bathroom, but being a historic building are not much changed since the 1930s, and some are not en-suite (a dressing gown is provided!). London (2 nights): The Royal Horseguards is a five-star hotel in the heart of Whitehall adjacent to the National Liberal Club. The style is that of an international hotel and bedrooms are very comfortable. All have a bath and shower.

How strenuous? The tour involves quite a lot of walking and should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 48 miles.

Small group: between 14 and 22 participants.

Great Houses of the North

3–12 October 2011 (MY 979)
This tour is currently full.

21–30 May 2012 (MY 255)
10 days • £3,080
Lecturer: Gail Bent

The finest country houses and gardens in northern England, from mediaeval to Victorian, with an emphasis on the eighteenth century.

Unhurried: there is plenty of time to rest, relax and absorb. Only two hotel changes.

Some of the most glorious countryside in England, plus a few items other than houses.

Excellent hotels and good food.

The country house is Britain's most distinctive contribution to the world's cultural heritage. Other countries have them of course, but none in such profusion, such variety, and in such a state of completion and preservation. Cutting a swathe through the northern half of England, from Derbyshire to Northumberland, this tour includes a remarkable number of the greatest and grandest.

One feature of the English country house is that it usually resides in the country; on the Continent the town often presses around the forecourt. And the countryside in England is among the loveliest in the world, and the most varied: on this tour you pass by gently rolling farmland with green fields, ancient hedges, majestic trees and contented livestock, and by the rugged beauty of upland moors.

All aspects of the country house are studied – architecture, furniture, decoration, works of art; gardens and parks; historical context and daily life; conservation and custodianship. Many of the houses have marvellous gardens.

The leisurely pace is a distinctive feature, with an average of fewer than two houses per day and the inclusion of a few items other than country houses. Time is allowed for relaxing and reflecting and exploring on one's own. Special arrangements comprise another significant feature with many out-of-hours openings and access to parts not normally seen by visitors.

Itinerary

Day 1: Kedleston (Derbys). The coach leaves Derby railway station at 1.45pm. One of the supreme monuments of Classical architecture and decoration in England, recreating the glories of Ancient Rome in the foothills of the Peak District, Kedleston Hall (1759–65) was the creation of Sir Nathaniel Curzon and, initially, three architects, of whom Robert Adam emerged the victor. The sequence of grand rooms for entertainment and show are homogeneous and complete (all the furnishings are by Adam), an impeccable manifestation of aristocratic wealth, education and taste. Spend the first of three nights near Chatsworth.

Day 2: Chatsworth, Haddon (Derbys). The home of the Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth House was rebuilt in the 1690s with the scale and sumptuousness of a palace and further augmented in the 1820s. The steady acquisition of fine furniture, sculpture and pictures created one of the finest private art collections in the world. 'The most perfect English house to survive from the Middle Ages', Haddon Hall evolved from c. 1370 to the 17th cent. after which nearly 300 years of disuse preserved it from alteration. The gardens are exceptionally lovely. Overnight near Chatsworth.

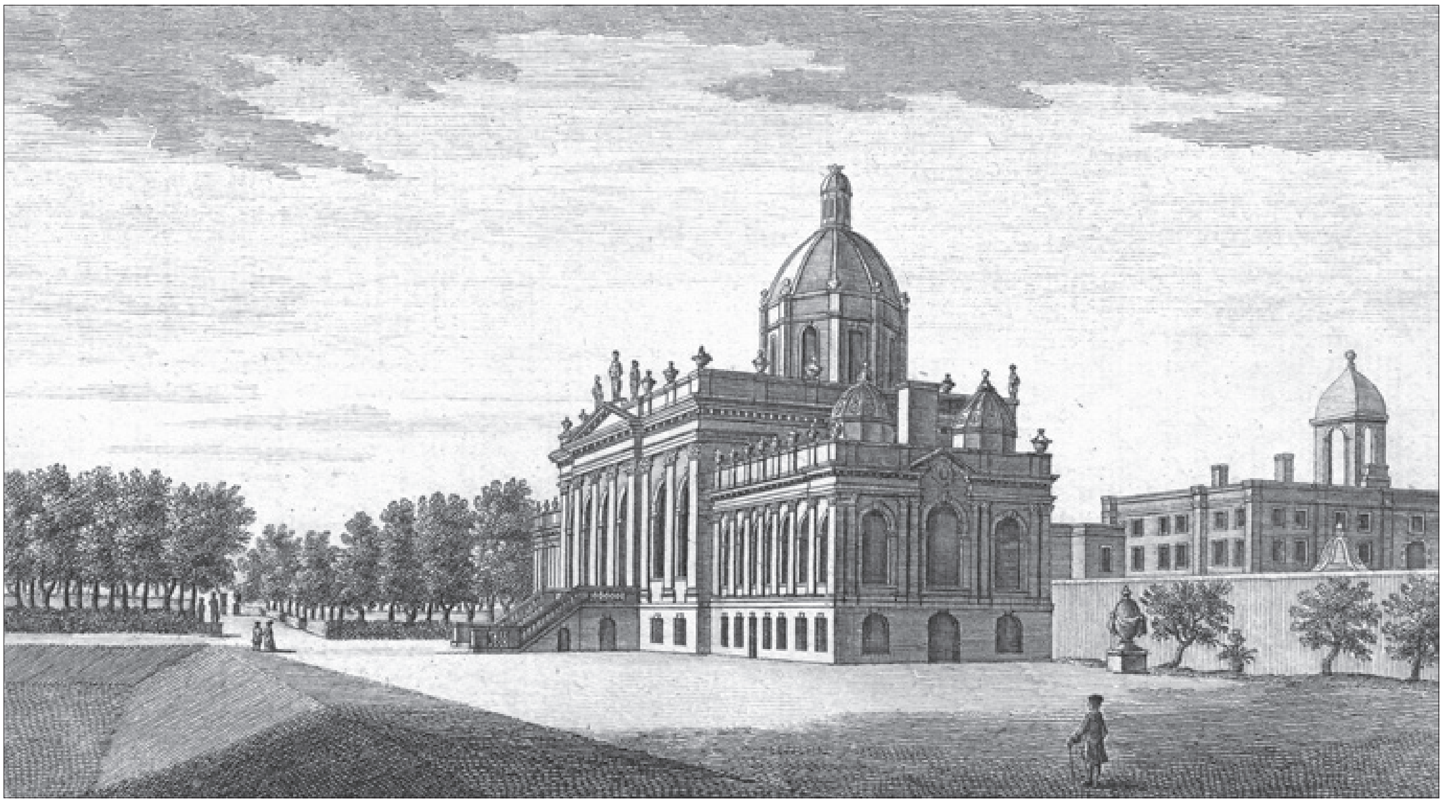
Day 3: Bolsover, Hardwick (Derbys). Bolsover Castle is an elaborate Jacobean folly, a splendid late-Renaissance sequence of rooms in mediaeval fancy dress. Hardwick Hall (1590) is the finest of all Elizabethan great houses, a highpoint of the English Renaissance, the façade famously more glass than stone. The unaltered interiors are decorated with stucco reliefs and filled with contemporary textiles and furniture. Overnight near Chatsworth.

Day 4: Harewood (W Yorks). Drive across the stark hills of the Peak District. Harewood House is one of the grandest and most beautiful of English country houses, architecture by John Carr (1772) and Charles Barry (1843), interiors by Adam, furniture by Chippendale and park by 'Capability' Brown. There are excellent paintings, Italian Renaissance to modern. First of three nights in York.

Day 5: Newby, Beningbrough, York (N Yorks). A William-and-Mary house (1693), Newby Hall was subject for the next two centuries to refurbishment and extension of the highest quality, one set of rooms (by Adam) designed to house a collection of Roman sculpture. 25 acres of fine gardens. Beningbrough Hall is an early-18th-cent. mansion with Grand Tour touches and pictures from the National Portrait Gallery. Alternatively, skip Beningbrough for an afternoon in York. Overnight York.

Day 6: Burton Agnes (E Yorks), **Castle Howard** (N Yorks). Burton Agnes Hall is a final flourish of the Elizabethan age, red brick and cream stone, topiary, marvellous carving and plasterwork, Impressionist and modern paintings: 'the perfect English house'. Designed by John Vanbrugh in 1699, Castle Howard is one of the few major Baroque buildings in England and the most palatial house on the tour. Excellent works of art and park with famous temples and follies. Private dinner at

DERBYSHIRE
YORKSHIRE
DURHAM
NORTHUMBERLAND



Castle Howard, engraving c. 1780.

Fairfax House in York, a Georgian town house. Overnight York.

Day 7: Raby, Auckland (Co. Durham). Within the formidable 14th-cent. fortifications of Raby Castle are suites of rooms of the 18th and 19th centuries. There are good paintings, furniture and Meissen animals and a deer park. Excellent art collections in a vast building in the guise of a French château make the Bowes Museum one of the surprises of the north. Grandest of English episcopal palaces, Auckland Castle was refitted in Neo-Gothic style and contains 12 superb paintings by Zurbarán. First of three nights in Newcastle.

Day 8: Belsay, Wallington (Nthumb). After Sir Charles Monck's return from Greece in 1805 he built Belsay Hall in a severely Grecian style. Delightful woodland gardens lead to a mediaeval castle. Wallington Hall dates to 1688 but was refurbished in the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries, the latter resulting in an arcaded two-storey hall with scenes of Northumbrian history painted by William Bell Scott. Overnight Newcastle.

Day 9: Alnwick, Cragside (Nthumb). Since 1309 the seat of the Percys, Dukes of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle externally remains a striking mediaeval fortress while the interiors are a lavish exercise in Victorian mediaevalism. There is a superb painting collection and a new 12-acre garden. A wonderful sequence of late-Victorian taste and technology, Cragside is a romantic Tudor-style pile (1869–84) designed by Norman Shaw for William Armstrong, inventor and manufacturer. Overnight Newcastle.

Day 10: Seaton Delaval (Nthumb), **Newcastle.** On a cliff-top site outside Newcastle, Seaton Delaval was the last of Vanbrugh's magnificent mansions. Innovatory management has followed its recent acquisition by the National Trust. The coach takes you to Newcastle railway station by 2.30pm.

Practicalities

Price in 2012: £3,080 (deposit £350). This includes: hotel accommodation as described below; private coach throughout; breakfasts and 7 dinners with wine, water, coffee; admission to houses, gardens and sites; all tips for waiters, drivers, guides; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £340.**

Hotels: near Chatsworth (3 nights): Located on the Chatsworth Estate, the Cavendish Hotel has been an inn for centuries. All bedrooms have good views and elegant décor with original artwork. In York (3 nights): The Grange, ten minutes on foot from the Minster, has been beautifully converted from a Georgian town house and the decoration and furnishings combine period and modern; very good restaurant; no lift. In Newcastle (3 nights): Jesmond Dene House, a 19th-century mansion in a quiet wooded suburb which opened as a hotel in 2007 and was Hotel of the Year in Northern England in 2010. Stylishly decorated, very comfortable, exceptional service, good amenities, garden, excellent restaurant.

How strenuous? Unavoidably there is quite a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Coaches can rarely park near the houses, many of the parks and gardens are extensive, the houses visited don't have lifts (nor do all the hotels). Average distance by coach per day: c. 60 miles.

Memberships. National Trust: members (with cards) will be refunded c. £40. Current annual membership is £50.50 or £83.50 for a couple. **English Heritage:** members (with cards) will be refunded c. £15. **Historic Houses Association:** some refund but not for out-of-hours admission.

Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

GREAT HOUSES OF THE EAST

ESSEX, SUFFOLK, NORFOLK, LINCOLNSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, RUTLAND

20–28 June 2012 (MY 289)
9 days • £2,880
Lecturer: to be confirmed

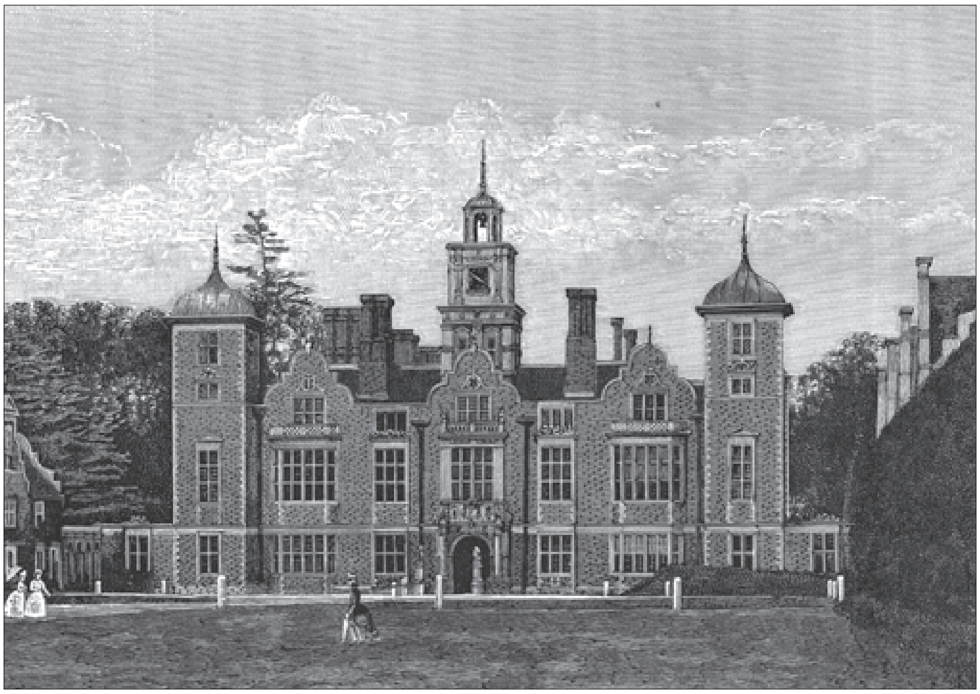
The best country houses in East Anglia and the East Midlands, outstanding examples from the end of the Middle Ages to the Victorian era.

The Tudor and Stuart age is particularly well represented, as is the Palladian style.

Great architecture, major works of art, spectacular gardens, landscaped parks, life both sides of the green baize door.

Exceptionally attractive towns and villages and magnificent lowland landscape.

Special arrangements and out-of-hours visits.



Blickling Hall, wood engraving from 'The Art Journal' 1887.

Why is Britain the *locus classicus* of the country house? Wealth is a precondition of their erection in the first place, and by and large there was a sufficiency. Geography has been kind in allowing agricultural prosperity, and we pass through places key to the Agricultural Revolution of the eighteenth century which further enhanced what Nature provided. The financial benefits of Britain's primacy in trade and industry seeped into stately piles. Relative peace and absence of foreign occupation, preference for primogeniture, a reluctance to revolt, a fruitful balance between the power of the monarch and the rights of the nobles: all these have been factors in the creation and maintenance of country house culture. Many of the houses on this tour have been in the same family for several generations.

The broad spread of this tour, East Anglia and the East Midlands, allows for the inclusion of some of the very finest country houses in England. If all you ever see of eighteenth-century England are Houghton and Holkham, they will suffice to shine in the memory for ever as the epitome of restrained grandeur and elegant opulence. Burghley is the most elaborate and monumental of Elizabeth great houses, Blickling the most beautiful of Jacobean, Belton the most perfectly proportioned of Restoration ones.

There are also several brilliant if less mainstream masterpieces. Layer Marney Tower is little more than a Tudor gateway, but what a gateway, the highest such in Britain. Felbrigg is not much more than a large-scale manor house, albeit an exceptionally handsome one, but it is one element in an enchanting ensemble which includes walled gardens, Italian paintings and a remote location. Harlaxton will thrill those who are prepared to be thrilled by such Victorian rumbustiousness, the Queen's private estate at Sandringham will impress with its quietly regal interiors despite pretensions to be unexceptional, Deene Park will captivate with the depth of its history and the authenticity of its atmosphere.

A feature of the tour is the opportunity to spend a little time in some of the loveliest towns and villages in England – Lavenham, Norwich, Stamford. And then there is the ravishing countryside, East Anglia with its broad undulations, big skies, fens and bosky vistas, and the rolling farmland and magnificent trees of the 'Dukeries'.

Itinerary

Day 1: Layer Marney (Essex). The coach leaves London at 1.30pm. Layer Marney Tower is an apposite first visit: the seven-storey gatehouse is a final flamboyant fling of the Middle Ages, while its Renaissance ornament is harbinger of the classicism which dominated English architecture for the next 400 years. First of three nights in Lavenham (Suffolk), one of the loveliest villages in England.

Day 2: Audley End, Lavenham (Essex, Suffolk). Audley End was the most ambitious house to be built in the reign of James I but was later reduced, altered and re-Jacobeanised, revealing both changes in taste and in styles of country house living. Delicious Robert Adam rooms and park landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. In the later afternoon explore the abundance of mediaeval and Elizabethan houses in Lavenham and its superb parish church. Overnight Lavenham.

Day 3: Ickworth, Euston (Suffolk). Ickworth is almost as eccentric as its builder, the 4th Earl of Bristol (also a bishop), a glorious Neo-Classical rotunda attached to curving wings intended to accommodate art and antiquities acquired on his incessant travels. Euston Hall is Restoration and Palladian, still grand despite reduction and equipped with fine pictures, 17th-century gardens by John Evelyn and a park landscaped by William Kent and 'Capability' Brown. Overnight Lavenham.

Day 4: Norwich, Blickling (Norfolk). Stop for a while at Norwich, an exceedingly attractive county town with castle and cathedral. Jacobean Blickling Hall is one of the loveliest of English country houses, red brick with stone dressings and mediaeval sprawl constrained by Renaissance symmetry. Among its treasures are a long gallery, library and a variety of art and furnishings, and the gardens are spectacular. First of two nights in Norfolk.

Day 5: Holkham, Felbrigg (Norfolk). With Holkham Hall (1730s) the English country house reached a moment of perfection, the serene Palladian edifice contrasting with the 'natural' layout of the deer park. Within are magnificent classical halls and a collection of paintings, sculpture and furniture of staggering richness. Felbrigg Hall is a lovely 17th-century house whose chief glory is the suite of rooms arranged in the 18th century to display paintings collected on the Grand Tour. Overnight Norfolk.

Day 6: Houghton, Sandringham (Norfolk). The grandest monument of English Palladianism, Houghton Hall was built for Sir Robert Walpole. There are outstanding artworks, a spectacular walled garden and an extensive park. Sandringham was built for Edward VII when Prince of Wales and now belongs to the Queen. An attractive Jacobean-style mansion set in a landscaped garden, the principal rooms have the glittering opulence of a royal residence despite their intended informality. First of three nights in Rutland.

Day 7: Burghley, Deene Park (Lincs, Northants). The grandest of Elizabethan houses, Burghley was built by the Queen's chief minister and magnificently remodelled internally a hundred years later. The paintings and furniture are superb. Though also largely 16th-century, Deene Park feels very different and is still very much the home of the Brudenells. Full of good things, there is also an enchanting riverside garden. Time is spent in Stamford, one of England's best preserved historic towns. Overnight Rutland.

Day 8: Belton, Harlaxton, Belvoir (Lincs, Rutland). A building of supreme and serene beauty, Belton is the classic Restoration house. Fine contents and formal gardens. Victorian Harlaxton Manor is Elizabethan revival on steroids, hallucinatory historicism, quite splendid (you might hate it). After a rest at the hotel, drive to Belvoir Castle, home of the Duke of Rutland and his young family, for a private evening tour and dinner: hilltop Regency Gothic with breath-taking views and magnificent ceremonial interiors. Overnight Rutland.

Day 9: Rushton, Boughton (Northants). Rushton Triangular Lodge, an Elizabethan miniature, is laden with symbolism. Palatial in scale and sumptuously fitted out, Boughton House echoes Versailles (its builder was ambassador to the court of Louis XIV). It has scarcely changed since the end of the seventeenth century, and sits amid a great estate. Return to London at c. 4.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,880 (deposit £300). This includes: hotel accommodation as described below; private coach throughout; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 6 dinners with wine, water and coffee; admission to houses, gardens and sites; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £520.**

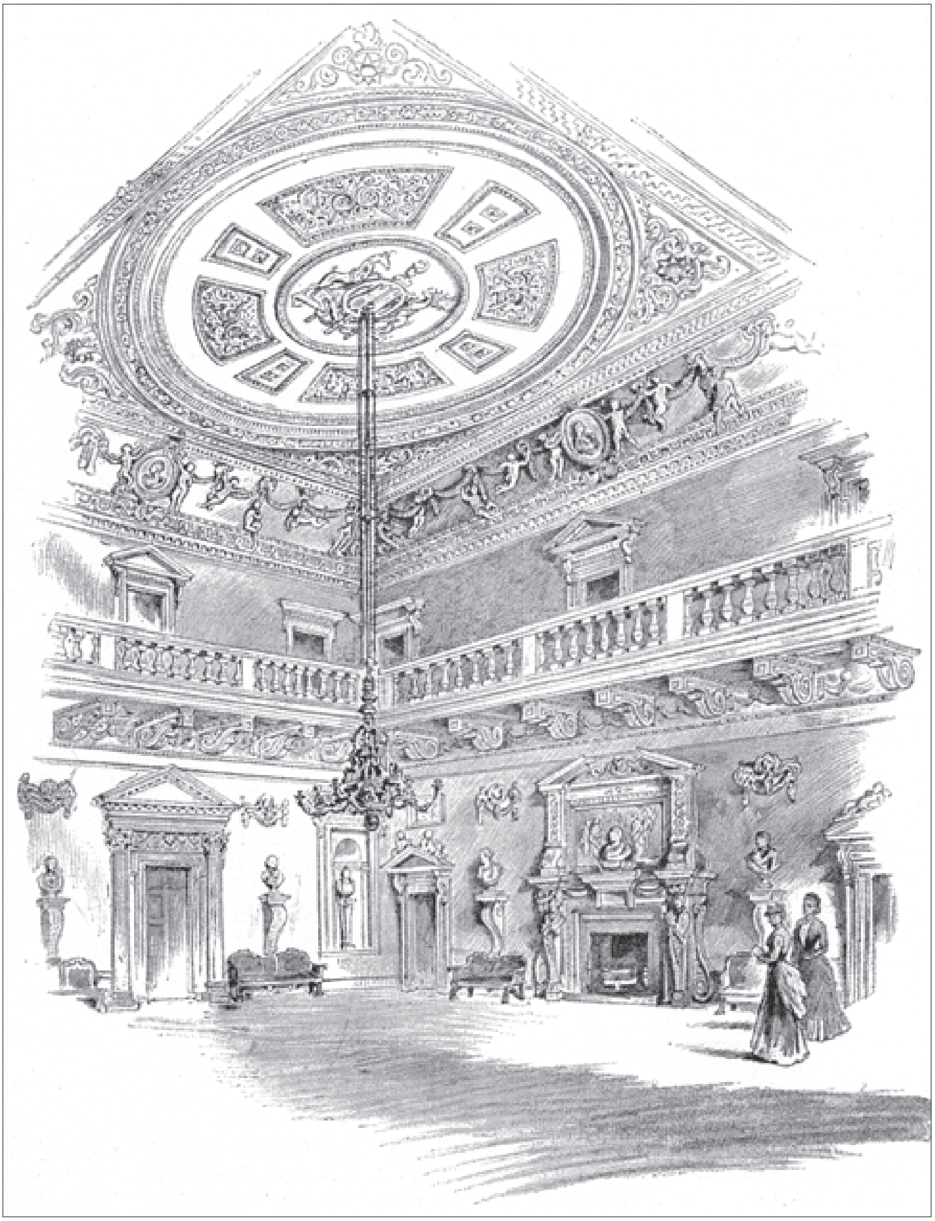
Hotels: in Lavenham (3 nights): dating from the 15th-century, The Swan at Lavenham has been an inn since 1667; rooms have been recently renovated yet retain their historical character; excellent restaurant; rooms at the front of the hotel may suffer from some traffic noise. In Congham (2 nights): The Congham Hall Hotel was refurbished in 2010; rooms are airy and well appointed with a traditional country house décor; public rooms are pleasant and informal; attractive gardens. In Stapleford (3 nights): set in extensive grounds and farmland, the Stapleford Park Hotel was converted from a private country house just 25 years ago; several very attractive public rooms, a large garden, spa and indoor swimming pool; rooms have a contemporary décor.

How strenuous? Unavoidably, there is quite a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Coaches can rarely park near the houses, many of the parks and gardens are extensive, the houses visited don't have lifts (nor do all the hotels). Average distance by coach per day: c. 87 miles.

Memberships. National Trust: members (with cards) will be refunded c. £30. Current annual membership is £50.50 or £83.50 for a couple.

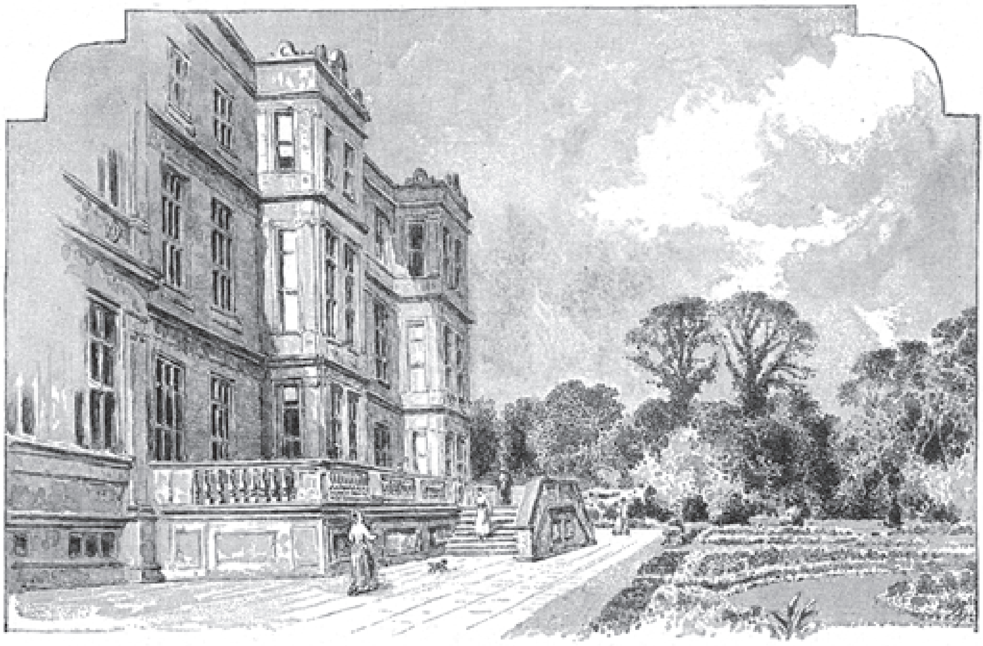
Small group: between 12 and 22 participants.

Houghton Hall, engraving 1887 after F.G. Kitton.



Great Houses of the South West

Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset, Devon



Longleat, engraving from 'Historic Houses of the United Kingdom' 1892.

4–11 September 2012 (mz 366)
8 days • £2,820
Lecturer: to be confirmed

A new tour for 2012.

Great country houses, historic gardens and parks in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset and Devon.

Major examples of a huge range of styles from the twelfth century to the twentieth.

Many houses contain outstanding picture collections and exceptional furniture.

Special arrangements and out-of-hours visits.

Hotels in former country houses.

The landscapes seen on this tour are immensely varied and remorselessly alluring – the noble chalk downs of Wiltshire, the evocative Levels of Somerset, the enchanting patchwork fields of Devon, the verdant hidden valleys of Exmoor, the little hills of Dorset.

The houses seen are equally varied. Laycock and Longleat and Montacute are among the finest of Henrician and Elizabethan mansions in England. The Stuart era is superbly represented by the incomparable Wilton House, star of the first phase of Palladian classicism in England, and by the Dutch classicism of Dyrham, while the eighteenth century is wonderfully exemplified at Stourhead and by the delicious Adam interiors at Saltram. Victoria's reign has magnificent ambassadors in Highclere and Tyntesfield, and the Edwardian continuation is beautifully if eccentrically demonstrated at Castle Drogo. Real castles are represented by the extraordinary Berkeley, still a family home, and, if now more picturesque than defensive, at Dunster.

A first-rate country house is more than a house. Clustering around are gardens, auxiliary buildings and a park – at Stourhead, perhaps the most influential one in the world – and beyond lie working farms and enterprises of all sorts. And of course inside the house there are furnishings and works of art and gadgets and utensils and curios: in many of the houses on these tours these moveables are of a quality and a quantity which surpass the collections of all but a couple of dozen of Britain's museums. Corsham and Kingston Lacy in particular are renowned for their picture collections.

Word must be added about the hotels on this tour, all three of which are excellent, and two of which are former country houses.

Itinerary

Day 1: Highclere. Leave London at 10.30am and drive (1h 40m) to Hampshire, arriving at Highclere in time for lunch. Begun in 1838 by Charles Barry (architect of the Houses of Parliament) for the Earl of Carnarvon, it is one of the grandest and most opulent houses of the age. (Now known to millions as Downton Abbey.) The Egyptian antiquities here are of international importance. Spend the first of four nights in a country house hotel in the village of Bishopstrow, Wiltshire.

Day 2: Wilton, Kingston Lacy. Inigo Jones contributed to the design of Wilton House, the outstanding achievement of the first phase of Palladianism in England. The double-cube room, with paintings by Van Dyck, is the most sumptuous English interior of the Stuart period. Also of the 17th century, Kingston Lacy is noted for its lavish interiors and outstanding art collection of Italian and Flemish Old Masters. Both houses have important gardens and parkland. Overnight Bishopstrow.

Day 3: Longleat, Lacock. Longleat was one of the largest and architecturally most progressive of Elizabethan houses, and is set in a 'Capability' Brown park. (We omit the interior, which is 19th-century.) In one of the loveliest villages in England, Lacock Abbey retains a cloister from the nunnery dissolved by Henry VIII and given to a courtier. There are Georgian modifications, and being the home of William Fox Talbot, a window which was the subject of the first ever photograph. Overnight Bishopstrow.

Day 4: Stourhead, Montacute. Though built in two phases, 1720s and 1790s, Stourhead is the perfect classical villa. The landscaped park of the 1740s is the most important of its kind, with a lake, temples, careful planting and contrived, if seemingly natural, vistas. Montacute is a magnificent Elizabethan house with the longest long gallery in England. An outstation of the National Portrait Gallery, it is hung with 16th-century pictures. Garden layout and architecture survive. First of two nights in Taunton.

Day 5: Saltram, Castle Drogo. Drive across Devon to Saltram, a largely 18th-century house with lavish Robert Adam interiors and fine pictures and furnishings. There are dramatic views of the Plym Estuary. A rugged Dartmoor setting overlooking the Teign Gorge matches Sir Edwin Lutyens's imaginative exercise in mediaevalism at Castle Drogo, though inside there are all the latest in early 20th-century comforts. Fine Arts & Crafts garden. Overnight Taunton.

Day 6: Dunster, Tyntesfield. Drive between the Quantocks and Exmoor to the famously picturesque village of Dunster. Atop a wooded hillock, the Castle of Norman origin long ago domesticated its defensive features, notably in the Carolean age. The great Gothic Revival mansion of Tyntesfield has hardly changed since the nineteenth century, caught in a time warp and stuffed with the authentic bric-a-brac of a Victorian country house. First of two nights in a country house hotel in Colerne, Wiltshire.

Day 7: Berkeley, Corsham. The keep of Berkeley Castle dates to 1117, the bulk of the rest to 1340–61. Little has been altered since, and yet it is still the private home of its builders, a family that served Edward the Confessor. The contents – tapestries, paintings, furniture – are magnificent. Corsham (Wiltshire) is an Elizabethan mansion enlarged in the 18th century and again in the 19th to display a collection of Old Master paintings, still in situ. Overnight Colerne.

Day 8: Dyrham. Transformed from a Tudor mansion at the end of the 17th century, Dyrham Park externally is mild Baroque in golden Bath stone, and inside exquisitely Anglo-Dutch with pictures and furnishings to match. It has scarcely changed since. Return to central London c. 4.30pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,820 (deposit £250). This includes: accommodation as described below; breakfasts and five dinners (with wine, water and coffee); transport by luxury private coach; admission to all the houses and gardens; tips for waiters, drivers and guides; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £340**.

Hotels. Bishopstrow House (3 nights): the house dates from the early 19th century and has been a hotel for 35 years. Public rooms maintain a country house décor, whilst bedrooms have been recently refurbished to a more modern style and have all mod cons. The Castle Hotel, Taunton (2 nights): an award-winning family-run hotel, pleasingly decorated and with excellent service. Lucknam Park Hotel, Colerne, Wiltshire (2 nights): this 5 star hotel is a fine example of a country house hotel, set in 500 acres of parkland and with a Michelin-starred restaurant. Bedrooms have a traditional décor with a safe, hairdrier, and tea and coffee making facilities. There is an indoor and outdoor swimming pool.

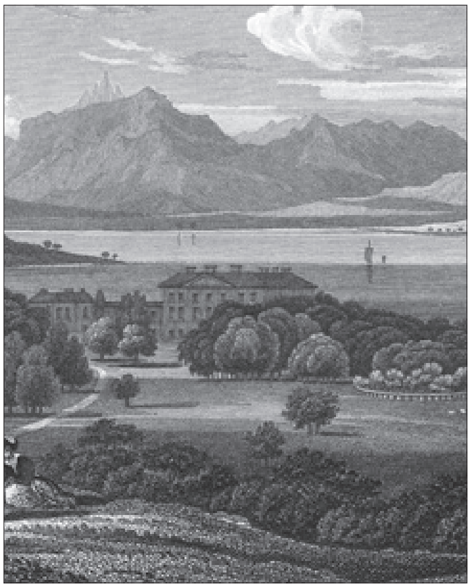
How strenuous? Unavoidably, there is quite a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulties with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Coaches can rarely park near the houses, many of the parks and gardens are extensive, the houses visited don't have lifts (nor do all the hotels). Average distance by coach per day: c. 95 miles.

Memberships: National Trust members (with cards) will be refunded c. £75. Current annual membership is £50.50 or £83.50 for a couple.

Small group: the tour operates with between 12 and 22 participants.

Ardgowan

A country house weekend in the west of Scotland



Ardgowan, steel engraving c. 1850.

14–19 June 2012 (MY 280)
6 days • £2,290
Lecturer: Caroline Knight

Stay as guests at Ardgowan, a grand 18th-century country house which remains a private home, not a hotel nor a museum.

Visit other country houses in the vicinity, some not generally open to the public, all by special arrangement or with privileged access.

Pass through the stunning coastal and Lowland landscapes of western Scotland.

A country house party as much as a study tour, there is time for leisure around the house and garden of Ardgowan.

The key feature of this tour is that the participants are not accommodated in a hotel. They are guests in a private home. A biggish home admittedly, an architecturally distinguished eighteenth-century country house with excellent pictures, exceptional furniture and gardens which spread out to the coast overlooking the Firth of Clyde.

Some negatives. You will find no minibar in your room, no television, let alone air-conditioning. Rugs may reveal generations of use, the bathroom may be a few yards down the corridor, the shower may be Edwardian and there is no reception (although staff are on hand).

If you are not put off so far, the compensations include bedrooms the size of an average sitting room laden with antiques and books, and the opportunity to roam at leisure through the hall, drawing room, library and dining rooms. You are also free to wander in the adjoining gardens and woods.

Ardgowan is a superb mansion of the 1790s designed by a follower of Robert Adam. For this very special tour it is the base for excursions to other country houses in the vicinity, at nearly all of which special arrangements will have been made exclusively for this group. In journeying between them, you pass through some heart-stoppingly lovely landscapes – lochs and sea, lowland heath and mountains, rolling farmland and forests.

As much country house party as study tour, there is plenty of time at leisure at Ardgowan. The house is a textbook case of the challenges facing current owners of historic properties of the first rank. Our hostess, Lady Shaw Stewart, is an art historian and a prominent figure in the field of historic buildings in Scotland. The lecturer, Caroline Knight, is her sister. She is also an art historian and has a speciality in the country houses of Britain.

Itinerary

Day 1: Ardgowan. The coach leaves Glasgow Railway Station at 2.15pm and leaves Glasgow Airport at 3.00pm. Continue west to the coast of the Firth of Clyde and reach Ardgowan in time for afternoon tea. After settling-in to your rooms, there is a tour of the house and gardens followed by some free time, drinks and dinner.

Day 2: Mount Stuart. Cross by ferry to the Isle of Bute. Magnificent in scale and in lavishness of decoration and furnishing, Mount Stuart was built in the last two decades of the 19th century by one of the richest men in the world, the third Marquess of Bute. The picture collection is superb. Beautifully maintained by the current Marquess, the house is surrounded by extensive gardens and noble woods.

Day 3: Strachur, Inveraray. Take a ferry across the Firth of Clyde to the Cowal Peninsula and drive to Strachur House. The property of Sir Charles and Lady Maclean, it is a fascinating 18th-century mansion of middling size; its 20th-century history is entwined with the western Balkans. Inveraray Castle is the ancestral home of the Dukes of Argyll. Despite its four corner towers and Gothic windows, it is entirely 18th-century, and inside are some extraordinarily fine rooms and a very good art collection.

Day 4: Ardgowan, Kelburn. The morning is spent at Ardgowan, entirely free or with the option of an in-depth tour to study some aspect of the house. In the afternoon visit Kelburn Castle, property of the Earl of Glasgow and in the same family for 800 years. Part remains a defensible tower house, and there is a lovely set of rooms of c. 1700.

Day 5: Culzean, Dumfries House. Drive through rolling Ayrshire farmland. Clifftop Culzean Castle is Robert Adam's boldest creation, with oval stair hall and round drawing room with views out to sea. Also by Adam, Dumfries House, famously saved for the nation with the help of the Prince of Wales in 2007, is a perfect Palladian composition which retains unspoilt interiors and a unique set of Chippendale furniture. We have an after-hours tour followed by dinner in the house.

Day 6: Glasgow. The exquisite 'House for an Art Lover' was designed in 1901 by Charles Rennie Mackinstosh though not built until 1989–96. The wonderfully eclectic Burrell Collection ranges from mediaeval stained glass to Impressionist paintings and is housed in a beautiful modern building in wooded parkland. From here the coach takes you to Glasgow Railway Station by 2.15pm and to Glasgow Airport by 4.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £2,290 (deposit £250). This includes private coach for transfers and excursions; ferry to the Isle of Bute and the Cowal Peninsula; accommodation as described above and below; breakfasts, three lunches and five dinners with wine, water and coffee; admission charges to all the properties visited; all gratuities; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £250.**

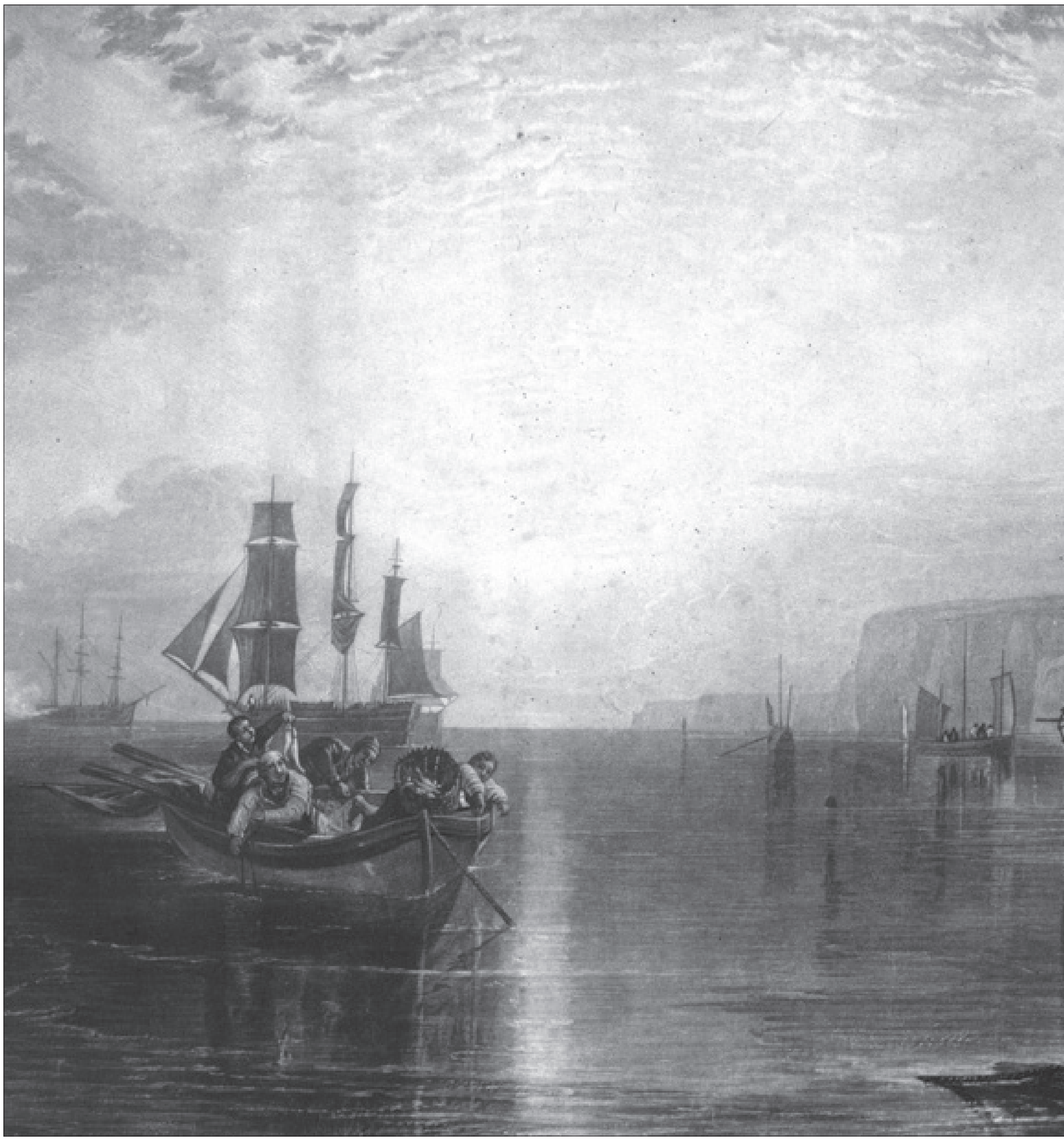
Accommodation. It cannot be emphasised enough that Ardgowan is a private house, not a hotel. Please read again the first two paragraphs of this tour description. Bedrooms vary in size, furnishings and facilities. While each room has its own bathroom, in some cases this is a few yards along a corridor. All have baths, some have showers as well. Towels, bathrobes and toiletries are provided. There is a lift to the first floor.

How strenuous? A fair amount of walking is unavoidable. Coaches can rarely park near the entrance to houses and grounds are often extensive. Most of the houses visited do not have lifts. However, the pace is relatively leisurely with more free time than is usual for a short tour. Average distance by coach per day:54 miles.

Small group: 10 to 18 participants.

TURNER & THE SEA

MARINE PAINTING & NELSON'S NAVY



Sun Rise, Whiting Fishing at Margate, steel engraving 1825 after J.M.W. Turner.

30 April–5 May 2012 (MY 225)
6 days • £1,640
Lecturer: Dr David Cordingly

A new tour for 2012.

A study of marine paintings and drawings by JMW Turner, Britain's greatest artist.

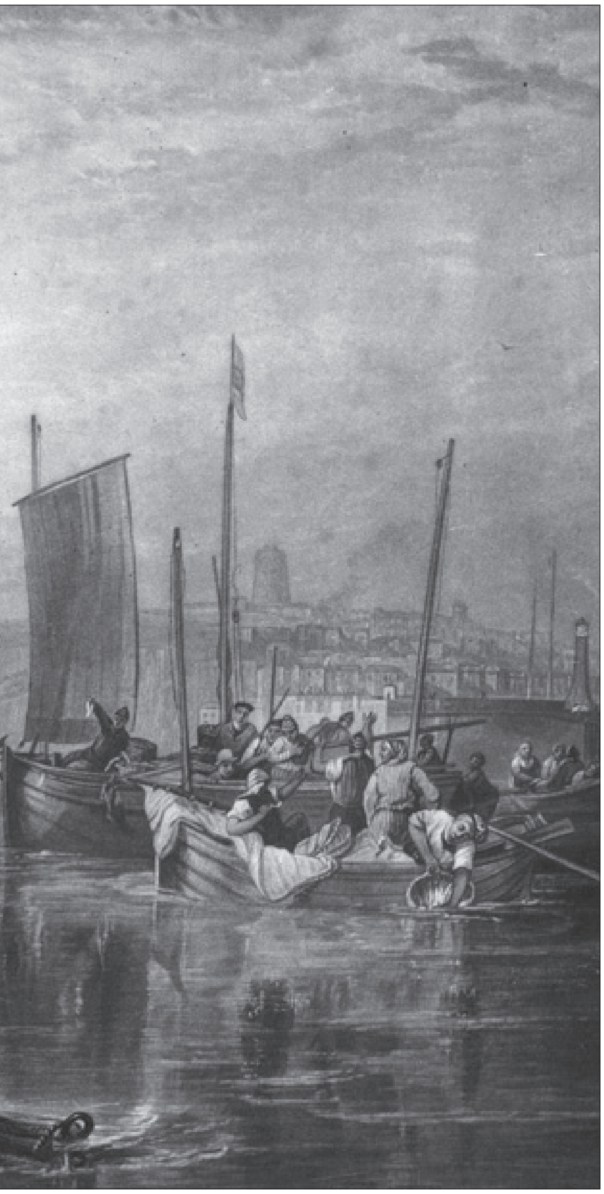
A study also of historic ships and dockyards – Turner's favourite subjects – and of the maritime history of his and Nelson's time.

Includes the exhibition *Turner and the Elements* at Turner Contemporary, the exciting new arts centre in Margate.

Led by a distinguished naval historian who is also an art historian and a yachtsman.

More than one third of Turner's prolific output was devoted to ships and the sea, and to river estuary and harbour scenes. His sketchbooks contain hundreds of drawings of fishing boats, beach scenes, breaking waves, and studies for paintings such as *Calais Pier* and *The Shipwreck*.

He was inspired by, and painted a number of pictures as homage to, the seventeenth-century Dutch painters who pioneered the seapiece. In *The Bridgewater Seapiece* he successfully challenged van de Velde, the acknowledged master of marine art, in a picture designed to hang alongside his *Dutch boats in a gale*. From these beginnings he went on to develop a unique style which conveyed a sense of water and light with an intensity which has never been surpassed. He was equally adept at stormy seas and tranquil calms. *Dordrecht,*



his painting of a Dutch packet boat becalmed, was described by John Constable as 'the most complete work of genius I ever saw'.

Many of Turner's paintings reflect Britain's conflict with Napoleonic France and the part played in that long-running war by Nelson's navy. As did most Englishmen and women of his day, Turner followed closely the exploits of Britain's warships. With an invasion by Napoleon's army a constant threat, the Royal Navy was crucial to the defence of the realm. News of Nelson's victories at the Nile, Copenhagen and Trafalgar produced rejoicing across the country with church bells ringing and bonfires in the streets, while Nelson's death and funeral were the occasion of grief and mourning on an unprecedented scale.

Turner painted two controversial pictures of the Battle of Trafalgar, and many fine watercolours of warships at Spithead. The most popular of all his paintings is *The fighting Temeraire* , the superannuated hulk of a first-rater being towed to her last berth, an evocative view of the ship which had fought alongside Nelson's Victory.

This tour follows two interweaving themes: places where Turner painted and where his pictures can be seen; and places associated with Nelson's navy.

Itinerary

Day 1: London, Greenwich. Meet in central London at 10.00am and visit the Clore Gallery. A wing of Tate Britain, this was built to display the Turner Collection, bequeathed to the nation by the artist on his death in 1852 and by far the largest holding of his works. Drive to Greenwich to see the paintings of the National Maritime Museum, now displayed in Inigo Jones's exquisite Queen's House. Turner's huge painting of Trafalgar is here. See also the splendid hall and chapel of the former Royal Naval College. First of three nights at Greenwich.

Day 2: Margate, Chatham. Drive east along the Kent coast. Turner first saw the open sea at Margate and he continued to visit throughout his life. Turner Contemporary, the acclaimed arts centre which opened in 2011, has an apposite temporary exhibition, 'Turner and the Elements'. At Chatham is the most perfectly preserved example of an 18th-century royal dockyard, with a rope-walk, sail loft, building slips and much else. Many of Nelson's ships were built and maintained here. Overnight Greenwich.

Day 3: London, Greenwich. Return to central London by fast ferry along the Thames. At the Courtauld Gallery in Somerset House – location of the Navy Board in Turner's time – there is a special viewing of Turner watercolours. Walk through Maiden Lane where Turner was born and visit the National Gallery which possesses some of his major sea pieces. Return to Greenwich by waterbus for the Nelson collections in the National Maritime Museum. Overnight Greenwich.

Day 4: Petworth, Portsmouth. Petworth House in Sussex is one of the finest country houses in England. The home of Lord Egremont, Turner's best patron, it houses his paintings of Chichester harbour and of the beautiful park of Petworth, a 'Capability' Brown masterpiece. In Portsmouth, make the first visit to the incomparable Historic Dockyard. Here see the excellent Royal Naval Museum, vital for Nelson studies, and HMS Victory, Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar. First of two nights in Southsea.

Day 5: the Solent, Bucklers Hard. Drive to the New Forest and to Bucklers Hard, an enchanting 18th-century village which was dedicated to ship building. Nelson's Agamemnon was built here. In the afternoon there is a trip by privately chartered boat along the Solent to see the anchorage at Spithead (once swarming with Nelson's ships) and the entrance to Portsmouth harbour (much painted by Turner). Overnight Southsea.

Day 6: Portsmouth, London. Walk around Portsmouth with a local guide to see some of the historic sights before visiting the Historic Dockyard again. Here see the remarkably well-preserved artefacts from Henry VIII's flagship the Mary Rose, and HMS Warrior, an ironclad of 1860, which represents a technological development chronicled in Turner's paintings. Return to London by c. 3.30pm when there is the choice of spending more time in the Turner Collection or of leaving the tour; Tate visitors are taken to Tothill Street at c. 5.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £1,640 (deposit £200). This includes: accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and four dinners with wine, water and coffee; transport by private coach, and two journeys by Thames waterbus; admission to sites and museums visited with the group; tips for waiters, drivers and guides; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **Single supplement £130**.

Hotels. In Greenwich (3 nights): Devonport House is a modern conference hotel housed in an historic building on the World Heritage Site. Bedrooms are bland but have all mod cons. There is a restaurant and pleasant bar. In Southsea (2 nights): The Queens Hotel is a three star hotel, the best available near central Portsmouth. Public rooms are opulent though bedrooms feel tired and décor is dated. Some rooms have a shower over the bath.

How strenuous? There is quite a lot of walking on this tour, and standing around in museums and galleries. It would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stair climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 70 miles.

Small group: 12 to 22 participants.

OPERA IN CARDIFF

DON GIOVANNI, KÁTYA KABANOVÁ, THE BARBER OF SEVILLE

Left: Cardiff Castle, wood engraving from 'Historic Houses of the United Kingdom' 1892; above: the Wales Millennium Centre; below right: Taunton, steel engraving c. 1840.

5–8 October 2011 (MY 999)
4 days • £1,090
(including 3 performances)
Lecturer: Simon Rees

October 2012 (MZ 406)
Details available in February 2012.
Contact us to register your interest.

***Don Giovanni* (Mozart), *Kátya Kabanová* (Janáček) and *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini) with David Kempster, Nuccia Focile, Lothar Koenigs, John Caird, Jacques Imbrailo, Anna Grevelius, Amanda Roocroft and Eric Roberts.**

Excursions and talks with Simon Rees, dramaturg of Welsh National Opera.

Stays in a 5-star hotel in Cardiff Bay.

Since moving into its new home in 2004 Welsh National Opera has gone from strength to strength, with a critically acclaimed chorus and orchestra.

After a painful decade of architectural controversy during which the first scheme was ditched, the WNO now have a fitting base in Cardiff. The new architects, Percy Thomas, were instructed to build something 'unmistakeably Welsh and internationally outstanding.' The result: The Wales Millennium Centre, a massive structure of slate, glass and steel, built to withstand the lashings of the elements on its coastal location and embodying the natural resources and industries of Wales.

It has the largest orchestra pit in the United Kingdom, and while the auditorium seats 1,850, it is acoustically excellent.

The Millennium Centre is one of many projects in Cardiff Bay, a development that has transformed the old docks of the city into a waterfront stretch of exciting design. Our five-star, ultramodern and light-filled hotel is a key element in the Bay and has variously been referred to by journalists as thrilling, sexy, soothing and solicitous. The centre of the city is an admirable Edwardian exercise in town planning, imperious and compact.

Itinerary

Day 1. Assemble at the hotel c. 3.30pm. An introductory lecture before an opera at the Wales Millennium Centre: ***Don Giovanni*** *(Mozart), Lothar Koenigs (conductor), David Kempster, David Soar, Nuccia Focile, Camilla Roberts, Robin Tritschler, Claire Ormshaw, Gary Griffiths and Carlo Malinverno.*

Day 2. Walk through the newly developed Cardiff Bay, a mix of late 19th-century red brick and challenging constructions of glass and steel including the Millennium Centre. See the Cardiff Bay Barrage, a masterly piece of engineering across the Ely and Taff estuaries. The afternoon is free. Opera at the Wales Millennium Centre: ***Kátya Kabanová*** *(Jánaček), Lothar Koenigs (conductor), Amanda Roocroft, Leah-Marian Jones, Stephen Rooke, Peter Wedd and Clive Bayley.*

Day 3. After the morning lecture, there is a guided tour of the Wales Millennium Centre followed by a visit to the National Museum of Wales which has one of the finest collections of Impressionist paintings in the UK. Opera at the Wales Millennium Centre: ***The Barber of Seville*** *(Rossini), Alexander Poloanichko (conductor), Andrew Kennedy, Jacques Imbrailo, Anna Grevelius, Eric Roberts and Clive Bayley.*

Day 4. Disperse after breakfast.

Practicalities

Price in 2011: £1,090 (deposit £200). This includes: 3 good opera tickets; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, and 3 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £190** (double room for sole occupancy).

Hotel: 5-star hotel, in the new development at Cardiff Bay. Rooms are well-designed, comfortable and richly furnished. All have balconies with views. Facilities include a swimming pool and spa. Included dinners are here and at another good restaurant in the Millennium Centre complex. Despite the high star rating, the service is sometimes slow and impersonal.

How strenuous? Not very, but all visits are on foot, including walking to the opera house from the hotel, a leisurely 15 minutes away.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

THE DIVINE OFFICE

A CHORAL FESTIVAL IN OXFORD

24–28 September 2012
Details available in November.
Register your interest now.

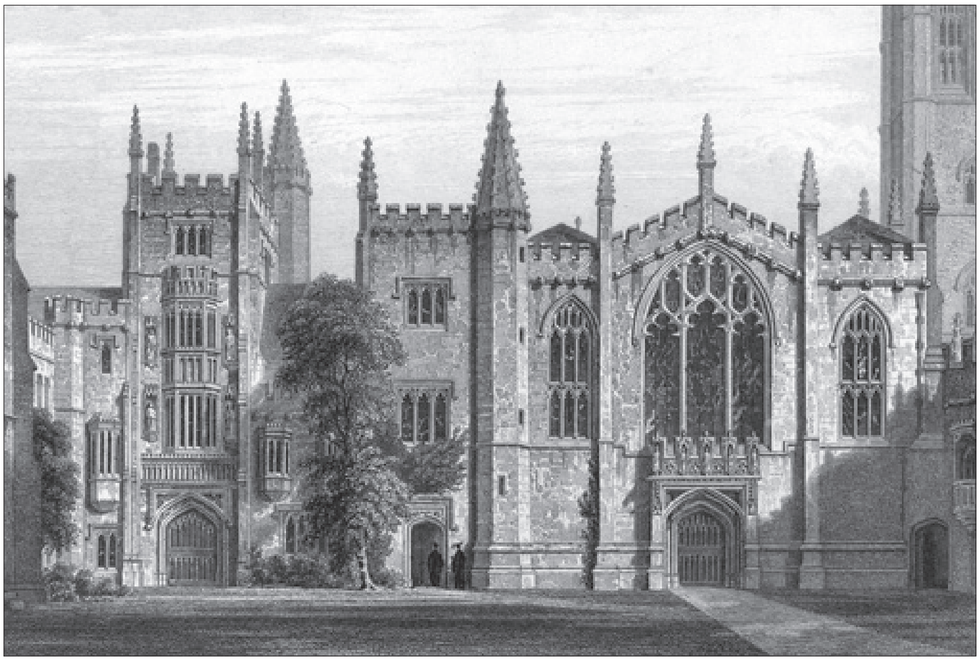
A celebration of choral music, largely liturgical, with mediaeval and Renaissance plainchant and polyphony prominent.

Centrepiece of the festival is the Divine Office, the eight Offices of the Hours, sung at the appropriate times of day and night.

Takes place in five college chapels, including Christ Church, Magdalen, Merton and New.

The best of Oxford's choirs perform together with some of Britain's leading specialist choirs including the Tallis Scholars and Stile Antico.

Access is limited to those who take a package which includes all the concerts and services and accommodation in hotels or colleges.



Magdalen College, Oxford, engraving c. 1840.

POLITICS & POLITICIANS

AT THE CASTLE HOTEL, TAUNTON

25–27 November 2011 (MY 122)
£720. Non-residential fee £220.
Fuller details available in August.

Martin Bell, Lord Deben (John Gummer), Simon Hoggart, Lord Hurd (Douglas), Michael Meacher, Patrick Mercer, Chris Mullin, Clare Short. *We are waiting to hear from one other possible speaker.*

The previous two having been gatherings of biographers and historians, this is something of a digression in our series of literary weekends. Though many of the participants have several books to their name, it is not for their writings that they have been invited to participate but for themselves. Among them are some first-rate historians; but it is as the makers of history, the subject matter of historians, that they will be gathered at the Castle Hotel in Taunton.

The purpose of the weekend is for politicians and political commentators to talk in a relaxed and non-confrontational environment about what they really care about, why they went into politics, what life as a politician is really like and what the major issues of the day are.

There will be four sessions of 2½ to 3 hours (with an interval) with a mix of talks, panel discussions and questions from the floor. Other features are after-dinner speeches, readings of favourite poems, and of course dinners with the speakers. The audience will be limited to seventy including a very few non-residential places. The programme in brief:

Friday evening (4.30pm): personal credos, on being a politician, the process of government.

Saturday morning (10.30am): personal political passions (security, overseas aid, environment).

Saturday evening (4.30pm): confrontation, conflict and conciliation; how politics used to be; my dream private member's bill.

Sunday morning: more political passions; prisons; politics and the press.

Prices: £720, 'garden room' £860 (deposit £100). This includes: two nights at the excellent Castle Hotel in Taunton with two breakfasts, dinners (with wines), and afternoon teas; drinks with dinner and in the intervals. Bookings can be taken now.

HISTORIANS WEEKEND

AT JESMOND DENE HOUSE, NEWCASTLE

2–4 March 2012
Details available in September.
Register your interest now.

Half-a-dozen leading historians talk about a range of subjects and discuss major historical issues at one of the best hotels in northern England. Residential packages and a few day tickets are available.

CHAMBER MUSIC WEEKENDS

THE 2011–2012 SEASON

THE VIENNA PIANO TRIO

VIENNA & PARIS

Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle
31 October–2 November 2011 (MY 113)
Prices from £620 per person

The Castle Hotel, Taunton
4–6 November 2011 (MY 114)
£690 per person (£820 garden room)

The Vienna Piano Trio joins us for the seventh time.

Two sets of dates in two different venues. The programme is the same for both.

Jesmond Dene House in Newcastle – not a weekend but a weekday event – and the Castle Hotel in Taunton the following weekend.

Programme

Day 1: 6.00pm
Haydn, Piano Trio in E minor, Hob. XV:12
Mauricio Kagel, Piano Trio No.2
Saint-Saens, Piano Trio in E minor, Op.92

Day 2: 11.00am
Beethoven, Piano Trio in G, Op.1 No.2
Ravel, Piano Trio (1914)

Day 2: 6.00pm
Haydn, Piano Trio in E flat, Hob. XV:29
Mozart, Piano Trio in G, K496
Paul Engel, *Gedankenstroeme*
Dvořák, Piano Trio No.3 in F minor, Op.65

Day 3: 11.00am
Beethoven, Piano Trio in C minor, Op.1 No.3
Schubert, Piano Trio in B, D.89

Above: The Vienna Piano Trio © Nancy Horowitz; below: wood engraving c. 1890.

Practicalities

Price per person at Jesmond Dene House:
Small double (double beds only) **£620.**
Standard double or twin: £660.
Junior Suite: £760.
Suite: £830.
Single room: £770.

Price per person at The Castle Hotel:
Standard room £690.
Garden room (double occupancy only) **£820.**

Deposit £100 per person.

The price includes: admission to all concerts; two nights' accommodation; two breakfasts and two dinners (with wine, water and coffee), interval drinks, two afternoon teas and all gratuities for hotel staff.

Tickets for individual concerts:
£20 per person.

To book individual concert tickets for the weekend in Taunton, please contact the Castle Hotel directly on 01823 272 671.

To book these for the Newcastle dates, please contact us on 020 8742 3355.

COMING SOON...

Details for the rest of the 2011–12 season of music weekends will be available in the summer of 2011. Contact us to register your interest.

The Academy of Ancient Music
'Gods & Mortals'
The Castle Hotel, Taunton
27–29 January 2012

The Chillingirian Quartet
'Forty Years On'
The Castle Hotel, Taunton
17–19 February 2012

The Nash Ensemble
'The Nash Collection'
The Castle Hotel, Taunton
23–25 March 2012

The Fitzwilliam String Quartet & Friends
Jesmond Dene House, Newcastle
27–29 April 2012

The Schubert Ensemble
'Great Piano Quintets'
The Castle Hotel, Taunton
23–25 November 2012

MOORE & HEPWORTH

THE TWO MASTERS OF MODERN BRITISH SCULPTURE

20–22 September 2011 (MY 971)
3 days • £690
Lecturer: David Mitchinson

A new tour for 2011.

Visits the new Barbara Hepworth gallery at Wakefield and the major Henry Moore exhibition at Hatfield House.

Includes other works by the two artists and other modern sculpture.

Led by the former Head of Collections and Exhibitions at the Henry Moore Foundation.

No other sculptors have done more for the reputation of modern British sculpture than Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. Probably they are internationally the best known of British artists of the twentieth century. In their diverse ways they created a distinct language of sculpture, almost a national style, influencing later figures such as Anthony Caro and Phillip King, both of whom were assistants to Moore. Both artists' works have become instantly recognisable, Moore's abstracted, reclining figures and Hepworth's polished, pierced totems.

This tour coincides with a major temporary exhibition of Moore's work in the grounds of Hatfield House, not far from his place of birth, and visits the just-opened Hepworth Wakefield, a new gallery housing a largely unseen collection located in the town where she was born. Also included on this quick dash through England are Moore's home and studio, the splendid Yorkshire Sculpture Park and other works by the artists and collections of modern art in regional galleries.

Itinerary

Day 1: Much Hadham, Northampton. The coach leaves central London at 9.15am. Drive to Henry Moore Perry Green in Much Hadham, the artist's former home and studio and now the main Moore research facility. The landscaped gardens provide a calm and attractive setting for many of his major works. The Parish church of St. Matthew in Northampton has a Madonna and Child by Moore, his only religious work. Continue to Leeds where both nights are spent.

Lecturers' biographies are on page 200.

Day 2: Leeds, Wakefield, West Bretton. The Henry Moore Institute in Leeds is one of the foremost centres for the study of sculpture and contains a comprehensive collection of British sculpture from the 19th century onwards. Hepworth was born in Wakefield, and the Hepworth Wakefield, designed by David Chipperfield and opened in 2011, is an exciting building excellently displaying works by its namesake as well as by other key figures in modern art. The Yorkshire Sculpture Park at West Bretton spans 500 acres of open fields and gardens and has one of the best collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in Britain. Overnight Leeds.

Day 3: Leicester, Hatfield. The New Walk Museum and Art Gallery has one of Moore's Reclining Figures, as well as works by Rodin, Marc and Pissarro and a collection of Picasso's ceramics. Hatfield House is hosting a temporary exhibition of Moore's works in their gardens and woodlands to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of this great Jacobean mansion. Continue to London where the tour ends, arriving c. 6.00pm.

Practicalities

Price: £690. This includes: travel by private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and two dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions and donations for museums, galleries and churches; tips for drivers and restaurant staff; the services of the lecturer and tour manager. **There is no single supplement.**

Hotels. The Queen's Hotel in Leeds is a comfortable 1930s establishment which has retained Art Deco interiors. Staff are keen and efficient. All rooms have air-conditioning, but some have a shower rather than a bath.

How strenuous? This tour would not be suitable for anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and who cannot stand for long periods of time. The average distance by coach per day is 162 miles.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

PERSIA IN EUROPE

7–11 September 2011 (MY 968)
5 days • £1,820
Lecturer: Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones

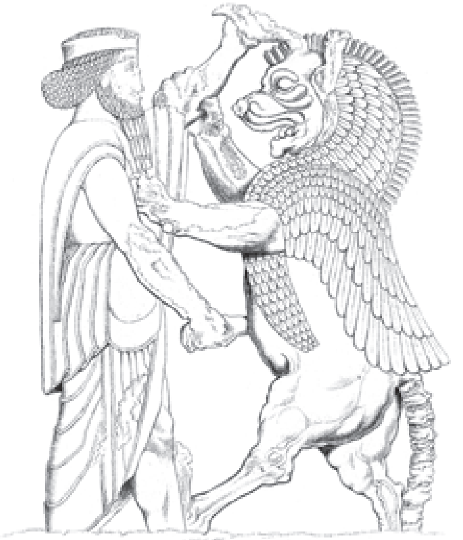
Contact us for full details or visit www.martinrandall.com

A study of masterpieces of ancient Persian art brought to London, Paris and Berlin in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Fascinating as a follow-up to a visit to Iran, but equally valuable as an introduction to the world's first multi-national empire.

Not just Persian: you visit the world's three greatest collections of Near Eastern antiquities.

There is also free time for the pursuit of other interests.



Low-relief sculpture from Persepolis (not seen on the tour), engraving c. 1860.

Practicalities – in brief

Price: £1,820 (deposit £200). **Single supplement £330.**

Hotels: in Paris (2 nights), a comfortable 4-star hotel with an excellent location near the Louvre. Rooms are small. Breakfasts are good. In Berlin (2 nights), a stylish but traditional hotel close to Unter den Linden. Rooms are of a good size and excellent standard.

How strenuous? With much of the tour spent in museums, participants must be happy on their feet for much of the day. Coaching is minimal, limited to short transfers within city centres and to the airports.

Small group: between 10 and 22 participants.

EAST COAST GALLERIES

FROM BOSTON TO WASHINGTON DC

2–15 May 2012 (MY 241)
13 nights • £4,990
Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

Every major art gallery from New England to Washington DC, providing an astonishingly rich artistic experience.

The whole range of western art is covered, classical antiquity to contemporary, and some eastern art.

Impressionism and Post-Impressionism are spectacularly well represented.

Revised itinerary includes the Mellon Center for British Art in New Haven.

Centrally located hotels in Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington.

Any art lover who has not seen the great galleries of the USA is in for a big surprise. Not only are there so many art museums with so many masterpieces, splendidly displayed in buildings which are often great works of architecture, but usually they are also vital, welcoming institutions where the delight of the visitor is the main priority.

This tour includes every major art gallery from New England down to Washington DC Many of the very good smaller ones are also featured. The whole range of mainstream western art is represented, from antiquity to the present day. If there is a particular emphasis, it is on the Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists. The art of the Orient also makes several spectacular appearances, and of course there is a continual current of American art and frequent doses of modern and contemporary production.

However full and comprehensive the tour may be in terms of works of art, we have not omitted the opportunity to see something of America beyond the museum doors. There will be some general sightseeing, sometimes with a local expert, and free time for independent exploration. Most of the hotels we have selected are within walking distance of the main museums and historic centres. This tour undoubtedly provides one of the most varied and richly satisfying aesthetic experiences the world has to offer.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.00am from London Heathrow to Boston (direct flight), arriving at 1.00pm (time in the air: c. 7 hours). Visit Trinity Church for an introductory lecture. First of three nights in Boston.

Day 2: Boston. Founded in 1630, Boston is an historic city with a long-standing reputation for culture and learning. Now a centre of the high-tech revolution, sleek glass towers co-habit with districts of narrow cobbled streets and brick houses and an important set of monuments from the colonial and revolutionary era. The Museum of Fine Arts has a fabulous collection, particular strengths being the Barbizon School, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. An afternoon walking tour of historic Boston. Overnight Boston.

Day 3: Cambridge, Boston. Separated from Boston by the Charles River, Cambridge is the home of Harvard University. Visit the

‘Manhattan’, etching with drypoint by William Walcott 1923.

University Art Museums which include the long-established Fogg Museum, outstanding particularly for early Italian paintings and Impressionists, and the Busch-Reisinger Museum of German and Nordic painting. Back in Boston, visit the Isabella Stewart Gardner Collection, a sumptuous Renaissance-style mansion crammed with magnificent works of art and furnishings. Overnight Boston.

Day 4: North Adams, Williamstown. Drive through very attractive New England countryside to the Berkshires in the west of Massachusetts. Housed on a vast 19th-century factory campus in North Adams, MASS MoCA is the largest centre for contemporary art in the USA. Williamstown is a small university town with the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, a wonderfully rich and varied collection outstanding for Post-Impressionist paintings beautifully displayed in a mansion. Overnight Williamstown.

Day 5: Hartford, Newhaven. En route to New York visit the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, America's oldest public art museum, founded in 1842. In Newhaven, the Mellon Collection at the Yale Center for British Art, the largest and most comprehensive display of British art outside the United Kingdom. Continue to New York city arriving early evening. First of four nights in New York.

Day 6: New York. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) houses some of the greatest paintings of the 20th century in its beautifully enlarged Manhattan home. An architectural walk with a local lecturer looking at the Art Deco monuments of midtown Manhattan. Overnight New York.

Day 7: New York. Visit the Guggenheim Collection in the famous spiral building (Frank Lloyd Wright) with primarily modern paintings. In the afternoon drive to The Cloisters set in a delightfully tranquil part of north Manhattan overlooking the Hudson river. A branch of the Met, devoted to art of the Middle Ages and incorporating arcades from five cloisters and other salvaged architecture, it is a marvellous home for sculpture, metalwork, tapestries, stained glass, manuscripts and panel paintings. Overnight New York.

Day 8: New York. Walk through Central Park to the Metropolitan Museum, undoubtedly the number one art museum in America embracing the whole gamut of artistic production from around the world. Magnificent benefactions and inspired curatorship have provided many great works of art and a superb standard of display, particularly the galleries devoted to the Impressionists, Tiepolo and to English Decorative Arts. See also the Frick Collection, the salubrious Fifth Avenue mansion with a small but brilliant collection of great paintings. Overnight New York.

Day 9: Philadelphia. Drive to Philadelphia. As historically the nation's most important art school, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts has accumulated the finest collection of American art. Some free time in the city: explore the Independence National Historical Park or visit the Rodin Museum which has the largest collection of his sculpture outside Paris. First of two nights in Philadelphia.

Day 10: Philadelphia. Drive out to the Barnes Foundation (visit subject to confirmation), one of the world's largest private collections of Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. The Philadelphia Museum of Art, the third largest museum in the country, has a wide ranging collection, including a 12th-century cloister, a Robert Adam interior from Berkeley Square and excellent Impressionists. Overnight Philadelphia.

Day 11: Baltimore, Washington. Continue south to the seaport of Baltimore. The Walters Art Gallery is an extraordinary and eclectic collection ranging from ancient Egypt to Art Nouveau, with a Raphael, mediaeval stained glass and historic jewellery among the outstanding items. The Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland's largest art museum, houses the Cone Collection, a group of 500 works by Matisse, and an impressive sculpture garden. Drive on to Washington for the first of two nights.

Day 12: Washington. A capital conceived and built on a truly grand scale. At its heart lies the Mall, a two-mile-long park with many monuments and museums. Foremost among them is the National Gallery of Art, with a major collection representing the whole spectrum of western painting; the East Wing (architect: I.M. Pei) contains modern works. Other visits include the Phillips Collection,

Frank Lloyd Wright

1–12 September 2012 (MZ 350)
11 nights • £4,280
Lecturer: Dr Harry Charrington

This tour is currently full.
Contact us to join the waiting list.

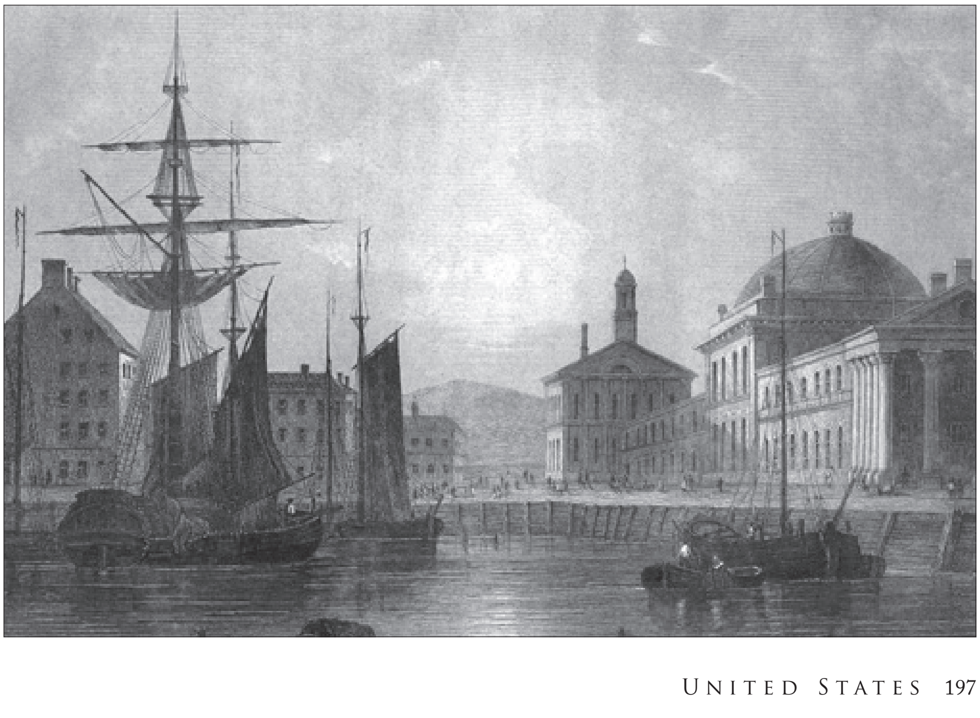
Includes Fallingwater, Jacobs, Robie and Taliesin houses, Johnson Wax Building and numerous other works by Frank Lloyd Wright – many of them visited by special arrangement.

Four nights in Chicago, with visits to the masterworks of the Chicago School and Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House.

Magnificent art collections including Chicago Institute of Art and Milwaukee Art Museum.

Drive through the countryside of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Illinois.

Boston, steel engraving c. 1860.



EAST COAST GALLERIES
CONTINUED

America's first museum of modern art, and the Freer Gallery, part of the Smithsonian Institution, with a fine Asian collection and Whistler's Peacock Room. Overnight Washington.

Day 13: Washington. A free day for independent visits. Suggestions include the White House, the US Capitol or another of Washington's many museums: the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (art from southeast Asia) or the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (20th-century painting and sculpture), all branches of the Smithsonian Institution. Drive to Washington Dulles Airport for the flight to London departing at c. 10.00pm.

Day 14. Arrive Heathrow at c. 10.00am.

Practicalities

Price: £4,990 (deposit £400). This includes: air travel (economy class) with British Airways (Boeing 747); private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; all breakfasts and 8 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission charges; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes (federal, state, city and airport); the services of the lecturer and local guides where used. **Single supplement £640. Price without flights £4,590.**

Upgrades: we can request flight upgrades; price subject to availability.

Visas: British citizens can enter the USA without a visa providing they apply for the *visa waiver* online and have a machine-readable passport. The current charge is $14. We will advise on this.

Hotels: Boston (3 nights): an elegant hotel near Boston Common. Williamstown (1 night): small hotel with a courtyard garden, a retreat from the city scene. New York (4 nights): smart 'boutique' hotel close to Central Park. Philadelphia (2 nights): a functional but comfortable hotel near the Independence National Historical Park. Washington (2 nights): a modern hotel, well located for the major monuments with attractive public areas and well-equipped bedrooms. Included dinners are in hotels and at selected restaurants.

How strenuous? You should be prepared to walk. Within Washington and New York we reach some of the museums on foot, journeys of up to twenty minutes or more, though taxis can be used. Within the museums, there will be a lot of walking and standing around. Average distance by coach per day: 49 miles.

Music: there may be performances in New York. Details will be available nearer the time.

Small group: between 14 and 22 participants.

TRANSOXIANA

SILK ROAD CITIES: KHIVA, BUKHARA & SAMARKAND

3–13 April 2012 (MY 213)
11 days • £2,950
Lecturer: Professor Hugh Kennedy

1–11 May 2012 (MY 232)
11 days • £2,950
Lecturer: Sue Rollin

4–14 September 2012 (MZ 364)
11 days • £3,050
Lecturer: to be confirmed

Some of the most glorious sights in the Islamic world.

Magnificent mosques and madrassas, acres of wonderful wall tiles, intact streetscape, memorable landscapes.

Remote, difficult of access and remarkably unspoilt. Traditional dress is still the norm.

Oxiana, Tartary, Turkestan, Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand: names to produce a frisson. They evoke alluring images of shimmering turquoise domes and exquisite glazed wall tiles, of lost libraries and renowned scholars, of the delicious decadence of the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, of gardens, poetry and wine, of the fabulous riches of the Silk Road between China and Christendom.

Less agreeable images are also induced: of Ghengis Khan and Timur (Tamerlane), the most far-reaching conquerors in history; of the tyranny and cruelty of the khans, perpetuating the last redoubts of mediaeval misrule; of the Great Game, the nineteenth-century Cold War between Britain and Russia; of terrain as hostile as the tribesmen and petty tyrants who inhabited its desert and mountain fastnesses; and of a post-Soviet penumbra of Stans of suspect politics and allegiances.

The three cities of the subtitle lie now in Uzbekistan, independent since 1991 but an entity which has its origins in late nineteenth-century Russian imperialism, which agglomerated a number of independent khanates, and whose borders were settled in the 1920s. It lies at the very centre of Central Asia. One of only two double land-locked nations in the world, it has a capital which is a thousand miles north of the Indian Ocean (Afganistan and Pakistan intervene), 1,400 miles east of the Black Sea and 400 miles from Xinjiang, China's largely Islamic western province. This is as the crow flies; extremes of topography and climate as well as banditry slowed or terminated the progress of earth-bound travellers.

A slave-trading oasis khanate, Khiva was, and remains, the smallest of the three cities. It is perhaps the most intact and homogenous urban ensemble in the Islamic world, with biscuit-coloured brick and blue and turquoise maiolica. In Bukhara, gorgeously adorned architecture spanning a thousand years still rises above a streetscape of indeterminate age. Samarkand has the largest and most resplendently caparisoned historic buildings of all. There are also visits to Shakhrisabz, which has breathtaking remains of Timur's palace, and to Tashkent, the spacious modern capital with the good museums and galleries.

Space is not at a premium in this part of the world. Broad tree-lined boulevards encircle the historic town centres and no expanding girdle of high-rise apartments disfigures the approach. Modernity has made relatively unobtrusive inroads: in one of the few nations on earth which has escaped the countryside scourge of ferroconcrete and breeze block, the whitewashed villages and farmsteads with their awnings of vines would hold few surprises for Tolstoy. Nearly all the women are to some extent in traditional dress, brightly coloured ankle-length dresses, and so are some of the older men. In the wake of economic liberalisation since independence, streets and courtyards are draped with the dazzling hues of carpets and textiles; the glories of the Silk Road in its heyday are not hard to imagine.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 10.00pm from London Heathrow for the seven-hour flight to Tashkent (currently the only direct flight).

Days 2 & 3: Tashkent. Touch-down c. 9.00am. Hotel rooms in the centre of Tashkent are at your disposal for the morning. The History Museum of the People of Uzbekistan is within walking distance if you want to venture out before lunch. Afternoon drive around the city centre, a modern city with wide avenues, spacious parks, glistening new government buildings. Among the places seen during the two days are the Hazret Imam complex, a group of mosques and madrassas (seminaries) from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries; the Timur Museum and park, a homage to the newly elevated national hero with 13th to 16th-century artefacts and models of some of the buildings seen on the tour; the Fine Arts Museum with collections from pre-Islamic sculpture to twentieth-century painting; free time for the Museum of Applied Arts or the Choroz Bazaar. Fly c. 6.00pm on day 3 to Urgench and drive the 20 miles to Khiva. First of two nights in Khiva.

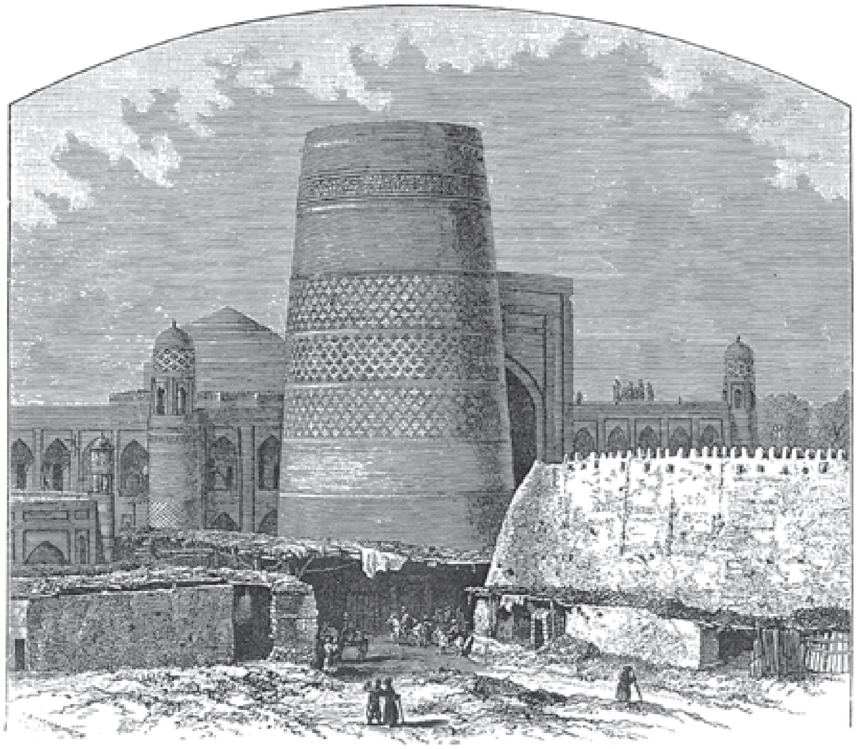
Day 4: Khiva. No modern intrusions spoil the timeless fabric within a rectangle of crenellated and turreted ramparts. Most of the buildings are 19th-century, but such was Khiva's isolation and conservatism that to the inexpert eye they could date to any time from the 16th century. The Friday Mosque, a forest of carved wooden columns some dating to the 10th century, the Tash Hauli Palace, whose harem quarters constitute the loveliest secular spaces in Central Asia, and the Paklavan Mahmoud Mausoleum where tiled interiors reach a peak of opulence.

Day 5: from Khiva to Bukhara. The 280 mile journey starts and finishes in an unspoilt landscape of green fields, plentiful trees and adobe farmsteads while the central section is undulating desert, specked with tufty shrubs which are briefly green in the spring. There are periodic sightings of the meandering Oxus, now a trickle compared to the mighty river crossed by Alexander the Great in 329 BC. Reach Bukhara in time for a walk before dinner. First of three nights in Bukhara.

Day 6: Bukhara. Gengis Khan ensured in 1220 that with notable exceptions (including the Kalon Minaret, at 48 metres then the tallest in the world) little of Bukhara's first golden age remains, but of the second, the 15th and 16th centuries, there survives much magnificent architecture, lavishly embellished. Today's walks take in the vast Kalon Mosque (finished 1514) with a capacity of 10,000, the small and serene Baland Mosque, several grand madrassas, the formidable citadel of the Khans and the Zidan, their infamous prison. Take tea in the shade of mulberry trees around a 15th-century pool.

Day 7: Bukhara. Free morning; there is plenty more architecture to see, and museums, bazaars, carpet workshops. By coach in the afternoon to places outside the centre of the city. The perfectly preserved 10th-century Samani Mausoleum and the remains of the 12th-century Namaz Goh Mosque display fine terracotta decoration. The Emir's summer palace, 1911, is a riotous mix of Russian and traditional Bukharan decoration with rose garden, aviary and swimming pool.

Day 8: Shakhrisabz. A 4-hour drive across a fertile plain where wheat and cotton flourish. Shakhrisabz was transformed by Timur (1336–1405) whose home town it was. An astounding survival is the most imposing palace portal in the history of architecture, an arch 22 metres wide with a wondrous range of tiled decoration. Further Timurid remnants include a mosque complex with three turquoise domes. Cross a mountain range (broadleaf woods, fissured granite, pasturage) and drop down to the plain of the Zarifsan river, and to Samarkand. First of three nights in Samarkand.



Khiva, wood engraving 1889 from 'Russian Pictures'.

Day 9: Samarkand. The Registan, 'the noblest public square in the world' (Lord Curzon, 1889), bounded on three sides by magnificent madrassas of the 15th and 17th centuries. The Museum of History, Culture and Art has collections from pre-Islamic as well as Islamic periods. Other places seen are the Gur Emir Mausoleum, burial place of Tamerlane, the adjacent Ak Serai Mausoleum and the Shah-i-Zinda, an ensemble of mausolea gorgeously apparelled in many types of glazed tiles.

Day 10: Samarkand. Commissioned by Timur, the Bibi Khanum Mosque is an exercise in gigantism and impresses despite partial destruction and over-zealous restoration. The adjacent Bazaar is a traditional produce market. Optional visits to the Afrasiab History Museum which documents pre-Islamic Samarkand and to the remains of the extraordinary observatory built by Ulug Bek in the 15th century. Some free time.

Day 11: Tashkent. Drive to Tashkent. The flight arrives at Heathrow at c. 8.00pm.

Practicalities

Prices: £2,950 (April, May), **£3,050** (Sept.) (deposit £300). This includes: air travel (economy class) with Uzbekistan Airways (Boeing 757); entry visa and handling fee; private coach throughout; accommodation as described below; all breakfasts, lunches and dinners with wine, water, coffee (plus meals on flights); all admissions; all tips for restaurant staff, drivers, guides, porters; all taxes; the services of the lecturer. **Single supplement £150** (double room for sole use). **Price without flights £2,360** (April, May), **£2,450** (Sept.).

Visas: required for most foreign nationals. Passports must be submitted individually to the visa agency CIBT for approximately two weeks. The cost of the visa is included in the tour price. Passports must be valid for at least six months after the visit to Uzbekistan. Non-UK nationals should check their entry requirements with the relevant authorities. Further instructions will be issued upon booking.

Hotels: Tashkent (first morning & 1 night): smart, modernised, centrally-located 5-star hotel. Khiva (2 nights): a converted madrassa, impressively restored, each room a former student's cell opening onto the courtyard. Bukhara (3 nights): a modern 4-star hotel in the centre of the old city, adequately comfortable and excellently located. Samarkand (3 nights): a very comfortable 5-star hotel.

Flight schedule changes are common. We recommend you keep diaries clear for 24 hours either side of the tour dates.

Food is basic, the options for vegetarians are very limited and special dietary requirements cannot be catered for at all.

How strenuous? A demanding tour which begins with an overnight flight. A lot of walking, some over rough ground. Fitness and stamina are essential. 3 days involve a lot of coach travel; average distance per day: 80 miles.

Small group: between 14 and 22 participants.

LECTURERS

Paul Atterbury

Emma Rose Barber

Amira Bennison

Gail Bent

Steven Blake

Tim Blanning

Monica Bohm-Duchen

Xavier Bray

Trevor Bryce

Tom Abbott
Specialist in architectural history from the Baroque to the 20th century with a wide knowledge of the performing arts. He graduated in Psychology and Art History from Carleton College, Minnesota and studied at the Louvre School of Art History in Paris. Since 1987 he has lived in Berlin and has organised and led many academic tours in Germany.

Dr Paul Atterbury
Lecturer, writer, curator and broadcaster specialising in the art, architecture and design of the 19th and 20th centuries. Has published many books on pottery, porcelain, silver and antiques, also on canals and railways, and two books on the Thames. Apart from childhood boating, his introduction to the river came with the writing of Nicholson's *Guide to the Thames*, the research for which included exploring the river from source to sea. He is a long standing expert on BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*.

Dr Paul Bahn
Archaeologist and Britain's foremost specialist in prehistoric art. He obtained his PhD at Cambridge and is a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a corresponding member of the Archaeological Institute of America. He led the team which discovered Britain's only known Ice Age cave art at Creswell in 2003 and his books include *Prehistoric Rock Art* and *Journey Through the Ice Age*.

Emma Rose Barber
Art history tutor and museum educator. She has lectured for SOAS, The Open University and as head of History of Art for the British Institute of Florence. She obtained her MA in Renaissance Studies from Birkbeck College and is currently researching for a PhD on the Mediaeval Wayfarer. She works for the continuing education department at Oxford University and the University of Kent.

Dr Amira Bennison
Senior lecturer in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge. She gained her doctorate in Moroccan history from SOAS and her publications include *Jihad and its Interpretations in Precolonial Morocco,* as well as numerous articles on the culture, society and politics of Islamic Spain and Morocco.

Gail Bent
Expert on British architectural history and historic interiors and an interior designer and artist. She studied at Toronto and Leeds Universities and Edinburgh College of Art and has taught at the University of Leeds, Christ Church Oxford, York and Nottingham. She lectures for The Art Fund, The National Trust and NADFAS.

Dr Steven Blake
Historian and lecturer, specialising in the history of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire and mediaeval architecture. He worked for thirty years at Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum and has served on many society councils in the West Country. He obtained his PhD from Reading University and is a Fellow of the Museums Association and the Society of Antiquaries.

Professor Tim Blanning
Emeritus Professor of Modern European History at the University of Cambridge, Fellow of Sidney Sussex College and Fellow of the British Academy. Among his many books are a study of Emperor Joseph II, the award-winning *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture*, the best-selling *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648-1815*, and the much-translated *The Triumph of Music in the Modern World*. His most recent book is *The Romantic Revolution*.

Monica Bohm-Duchen
Lecturer, writer and curator specialising in 20th-century art. She studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem before graduating in English Literature and History of Art from UCL, and with an MA in Art History from the Courtauld. She has lectured for the National Gallery, Tate, Royal Academy, Courtauld, Sotheby's and Birkbeck College.

Dr Xavier Bray
Art historian specialising in Spanish art and sculpture and Chief Curator of Dulwich Picture Gallery. Former posts include Assistant Curator of 17th and 18th-century European paintings at the National Gallery, London, where he curated numerous exhibitions: *El Greco, Caravaggio: the final years, Velázquez* and *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600–1700.* He completed his PhD at Trinity College, Dublin.

Professor David Breeze
Former Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments in Scotland, President of the Newcastle Society of Antiquaries and holder of three honorary Professorships. He is the author of the English Heritage guide-book to Hadrian's Wall and co-author with Brian Dobson of the basic text book on the Wall. He has also written on the Antonine Wall and has just completed a book on the Frontiers of the Roman Empire.

Emeritus Professor Trevor Bryce
Classicist and ancient Near Eastern historian. He is Professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of New England, Australia and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Lincoln University, NZ. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and has held visiting Fellowships at Princeton, Oxford and Canberra. His books include *The Kingdom of the Hittites* and *The Trojans and their Neighbours*.

Polly Buston
Art historian with an MA in French with English from Edinburgh University as well as an MA from the Courtauld Institute. She lectures at the Courtauld Summer School and works for art history publishers as editor and picture researcher. She was co-author of *Titian's Venice,* a multi-media project accompanying the 2003 National Gallery Titian exhibition.

Dr Katie Campbell
Started her career as a journalist and fiction-writer before obtaining a PhD in landscape history. She now works as a writer, lecturer and tour guide, and helps to run Bristol University's MA in Garden History. Recent publications include *Icons of Twentieth Century Landscape Design*, *Policies and Pleasaunces: A guide to the Gardens of Scotland* and *Paradise of Exiles: The Anglo-American Gardens of Florence*.

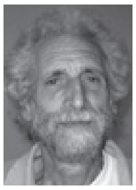
Carla Capalbo
Food writer with a degree in History of Art. She is a member of Slow Food in Italy, Guild of Food Writers and the Circle of Wine Writers in the UK and contributes to *Bon Appetit, Food & Wine, Decanter* and *The Independent*. Her books include *The Food & Wine Guide to Naples & Campania; The Food & Wine Lover's Companion to Tuscany,* and the award-winning *Collio: Fine Wines & Foods from Italy's Northeast*.

Dr Peter Cattermole
Formerly a lecturer in planetary geology and volcanology at the Universities of Wales and Sheffield. He has worked with NASA on the volcanoes of Mars and has travelled widely among the world's volcanic regions. As an astronomer, he has appeared regularly on BBC's 'Sky at Night'.

Terry Charman
Senior Historian at the Imperial War Museum. During his thirty-seven years there he has worked on many exhibitions and projects including The Churchill Museum, Holocaust exhibition, and D-Day to Victory exhibition.

Polly Buston

Katie Campbell


Peter Cattermole

Terry Charman

Harry Charrington

Felicity Cobbing

Barry Cooper

David Cordingly

Gordon Corrigan

As well as giving frequent lectures, he has made numerous TV and radio appearances as IWM spokesperson, and is an authority on the Battle of Britain and the Blitz.

Dr Harry Charrington
Architect and lecturer at the University of Bath. He has practised and taught in Finland and England, including five years in Northumberland and teaching at Newcastle University. He obtained his PhD from the LSE on Alvar Aalto, and has curated exhibitions on Aalto in London and Finland. He read Architecture at Cambridge and was the founding editor of *Scroope: Cambridge Architectural Journal*.

Felicity Cobbing
Executive and Curator of the Palestine Exploration Fund in London. She has excavated in Jordan with the British Museum, and worked throughout the Middle East, particularly Syria and Lebanon. Widely published on the archaeology and the history of archaeology in the Levant, she is co-author with Dr Raouf Sa'd Abujabber of *Beyond the River – Ottoman Transjordan in Original Photographs*.

Dr Roberto Cobianchi
Art historian and lecturer at the University of Messina. He studied at Parma University and the Catholic University of Milan, and completed his PhD at Warwick. He was a Rome Scholar at The British School in Rome and fellow of the Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome, and Villa I Tatti, Florence. His research includes iconography and patronage of the Mendicant Orders from the late Middle Ages to the Baroque.

Professor Barry Cooper
Professor of Music at the University of Manchester. His books include *Beethoven and the Creative Process*, *Beethoven's Folksong Settings* and *Beethoven* in the *Master Musicians* series. In 1988 his completion of the first movement of Beethoven's unfinished Tenth Symphony was performed at the Royal Festival Hall and he has recently published a new performing edition of Beethoven's thirty-five piano sonatas for the Associated Board.

Dr David Cordingly
Art historian and naval historian and Keeper of Pictures and Head of Exhibitions at the National Maritime Museum for twelve years. Among his books are *Life Among the Pirates, Cochrane the Dauntless* and the highly praised *Billy Ruffian: HMS Bellerophon and the Downfall of Napoleon*.

Major Gordon Corrigan MBE
Military historian and former officer of the Royal Gurkha Rifles. He served mainly in the Far East, but also in Berlin, Cyprus, Belize and Northern Ireland. Author of *Wellington, A Military Life*; *Mud, Blood and Poppycock: Britain and the First World War* and *Loos 1915, The Unwanted Battle*. Television appearances include *Napoleon's Waterloo* and *Battlefield Detectives*. He is an Honorary Research Fellow of the Universities of Birmingham and Kent, a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and a Member of the British Commission for Military History.

Steven Desmond
Landscape consultant, specialist in the conservation of historic parks and gardens and architectural historian. Obtained an MA in Conservation from York and lectures for Bristol and Oxford Universities. He is an advisor on historic gardens for the National Trust and broadcasts for the BBC and writes for *Country Life*. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Horticulture and Professional Associate of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Nicole Douek
Egyptologist who studied Ancient History and Egyptology at University College London. Lectures regularly at the British Museum and at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and is co-author of *Great Events of Bible Times*. She has excavated at Memphis with the Egypt Exploration Society.

Dr Michael Douglas-Scott
Associate Lecturer in History of Art at Birkbeck College, specialising in 16th-century Italian art and architecture. He studied at the Courtauld and Birkbeck College, University of London and lived in Rome for several years. He has written articles for *Arte Veneta, Burlington Magazine* and the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*.

Gregory Dowling
Professor of American Literature at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Read English at Oxford University and has published widely including scholarly works on English and American literature, a co-edited anthology of American poetry about Venice and a guidebook to Byron's Venice. He is non-fiction editor for the journal *Able Muse,* a member of the editorial board of the comparative poetry journal *Semicerchio* and contributes to the *Time Out* guide to Venice.

Richard Evans
Regius Professor of History and President of Wolfson College at the University of Cambridge and Gresham Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College, London. He is author of numerous books on Central European history including *The Coming of the Third Reich, The Third Reich in Power* and *The Third Reich at War,* and is currently working on the 1815 to 1914 volume in the *Penguin History of Europe.*

Dr Karen Exell
Curator of Egypt and the Sudan at the Manchester University Museum. She studied Egyptology with Akkadian at the University of Oxford and undertook post-graduate studies at the University of St Andrews and Durham University. She worked for several years as a curator at the University Museums, Durham, and is Chair of the Board of the Egypt Exploration Society.

Dr Andrew Farrington
Lecturer in Ancient History at the Democritus University of Thrace and resident in Greece since 1994. He has also taught at the University of Western Australia, the Australian National University and Victoria University of Wellington and is the author of *The Roman Baths of Lycia*. He studied Literae Humaniores followed by a doctorate in Roman Archaeology, both at Oxford.

Clare Ford-Wille
Art historian and lecturer. She graduated in History and History of Art from Birkbeck College, London University and regular teaches at Birkbeck College, University of London, Morley College and the City Lit. She lectures for the V&A, the National Gallery and for NADFAS branches in Britain and Europe and recent publications include entries in the *Companion Guide to European Art.*

Steven Desmond

Nicole Douek

Gregory Dowling

Richard Evans

Karen Exell

Clare Ford-Wille

Frances Fowle

Alexandra Gajewski

Alan George

Ffiona Gilmore Eaves

Garth Gilmour

Angus Graham

Angus Haldane

Vivien Hamilton

Annisa Helou

Dr Frances Fowle
Senior Curator of French Art at the National Gallery of Scotland and Senior Lecturer in History of Art at the University of Edinburgh. She is also a Trustee of the Burrell Collection and has curated several major exhibitions at the National Gallery of Scotland, including *Impressionism and Scotland* and *Van Gogh and Britain*. Her publications include *Monet and French Landscape: Vetheuil and Normandy* and *Impressionism, Urbanism Environment*.

Dr Alexandra Gajewski
Specialist in mediaeval architecture. She read Art History at Münster University followed by a PhD in Gothic architecture in northern Burgundy from the Courtauld. She has lectured at the Courtauld, Birkbeck and the V&A and was recently visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan.

Alan George
Musicologist and viola player. He is a founder-member of the Fitzwilliam String Quartet, principal viola with Southern Sinfonia and conductor of The Academy of St Olaves in York. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music and King's College Cambridge and was a lecturer at the University of York until 1988 and professor of viola at the RNCM for several years. He holds Honorary Doctorates at Bucknell (USA) and York Universities.

Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves
Read Archaeology at Cambridge followed by a PhD on the early church at Porec. She has lectured for the WEA, for whom she founded and managed a study tours section, and for various extra-mural departments. She is the co-author of *Retrieving the record: a century of archaeology at Porec* published by the University of Zagreb.

Dr Garth Gilmour
Biblical archaeologist based at Oxford University, where he also obtained his doctorate. He has lived in Israel and excavated at the Philistine sites of Ekron and Ashkelon. His interests include eastern Mediterranean trade in the Late Bronze Age and the archaeology of religion in ancient Israel and he is currently researching the Palestine Exploration Fund's excavation in Jerusalem in the 1920s.

Dr Angus Graham
Academic tutor in Egyptian Archaeology at the University of Sunderland. He studied Egyptian Archaeology at UCL from where he also obtained his PhD. He is the Field Director of the Egypt Exploration Society's Theban Harbours and Waterscapes Survey and has worked on archaeological projects at Giza, Memphis, Karnak and Edfu.

Angus Haldane
Studied Classics at Oxford University with a particular emphasis on Roman history, literature and art. He subsequently studied for a post-graduate degree in Byzantine and Renaissance art at the Courtauld Institute and has taught Greek and Latin and has lectured on the ancient world in Italy and in Greece.

Vivien Hamilton
Research Manager for Art, Glasgow Museums and Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Art History, Glasgow University. She graduated from Glasgow with a degree in Art History and English Literature followed by postgraduate research in the USA. She has presented a series of eighteen programmes (STV) on contemporary art and her publications include *Boudin at Trouville* and *Millet to Matisse.*

Anissa Helou
Writer, journalist, broadcaster and blogger. Born and raised in Beirut and the author of numerous award-winning cookbooks including *The Fifth Quarter*, *An Offal Cookbook*; *Modern Mezze*; *Savory Baking from the Mediterranean*; *Mediterranean Street Food*; *Café Morocco*; and *Lebanese Cuisine* – which was a finalist for the Andre Simon awards. An accomplished photographer and intrepid traveller, she is also fluent in French and Arabic.

Gijs van Hensbergen
Art historian and author specialising in Spain and the USA. His books include *Gaudí, In the Kitchens of Castile* and *Guernica* and he has published in the *Burlington Magazine* and *Wall Street Journal*. He read languages at Utrecht University and Art History at the Courtauld, and undertook postgraduate studies in American art of the 1960s. He has worked in England, the USA and Spain as exhibitions organiser, TV researcher and critic and is currently working for prolonged periods of time in New York.

Professor Richard Hingley
Professor of Roman Archaeology at Durham and Director of the Durham Centre for Roman Culture. He is currently directing a major project on Hadrian's Wall, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. His books include *Roman Officers & English Gentlemen*, *Globalizing Roman Culture*, *Boudica: Iron Age Warrior Queen* and *The Recovery of Roman Britain*.

Caroline Holmes
Garden historian and lecturer at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education, the Royal Horticultural Society, NADFAS and the National Trust. She is the author of *Icons of Garden Design, Monet at Giverny* and *Follies of Europe – architectural extravaganzas* and has worked as a broadcaster on television and radio. Garden consultancies include the Royal Opera House's Production Campus for the Performing Arts.

Adam Hopkins
Journalist and author, now living in a mountain village in Spain. He studied at King's College, Cambridge and has contributed extensively to national newspapers in Britain on Spanish culture and travel. His books include *Spanish Journeys: a Portrait of Spain, Holland: its History, Paintings and People* and *Crete: its Past, Present and People*. Together with his wife, Gaby Macphedran, he has devised many tours in Spain and Portugal.

Henry Hurst
Former Reader in Classical Archaeology at Cambridge University. His special interest is the archaeology of ancient cities and he has been an excavating archaeologist, working at Carthage for many years and more recently in Rome. He has travelled widely in Greece and Turkey.

Michael Ivory
Landscape architect, writer, translator and lecturer. He studied Modern Languages at Oxford followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in Landscape Design. He is a former lecturer at the University of Central England and committee member of the British Czech & Slovak

Gijs van Hensbergen

Richard Hingley

Caroline Holmes

Adam Hopkins

Henry Hurst

Michael Ivory

Jonathan Keates

Hugh Kennedy

Michael Kent

Helen King

Caroline Knight

Helen Langdon

Richard Langham Smith

Rowena Loverance

Alexey Makhrov

Association. His publications include the *Insight pocket guide: Czech Republic*, *Key Guide Prague* and *Berlitz Czech Republic*.

Chloe Johnson
Senior Curatorial Officer at Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum and previously worked at the Tate. She specialised in 19th-century British and French art at the Courtauld Institute and obtained her PhD from the University of Sussex on Pre-Raphaelite art. She has spoken on art, exhibitions and current affairs for BBC Coventry and Warwickshire.

Dr Shona Kallestrup
Art historian and linguist and a specialist in the art of Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe. She has an MA from the Warburg Institute and a PhD from the University of St Andrews. She has taught at Copenhagen University, St Andrews, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. The author of *Art and Design in Romania 1866–1927*, her current research includes Scandinavian national revival movements and the work of Asger Jorn.

Jonathan Keates
Author and journalist whose books include biographies of Handel and Purcell, the short story collections *Allegro Postillions* and *Soon To Be A Major Motion Picture, Italian Journeys* and *The Siege Of Venice*. He writes programme notes for Covent Garden, ENO, WNO, Opera North and the Buxton Festival and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a Trustee of the London Library. He teaches English at the City of London School.

Professor Hugh Kennedy
Professor of Arabic at SOAS and formerly Professor of Middle Eastern History at the University of St Andrews. He studied at the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies in Beirut, and read Arabic and Persian at Cambridge. He is author of *The Early Abbasid Caliphate; The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates; Crusader Castles* and *Muslim Spain and Portugal*.

Dr Michael Kent
Marine biologist and expert on the Cornwall Coast Path. He was Coastwatch Co-ordinator for the Nature Conservancy Council, helped set up the Centre for Applied Zoology at Cornwall College, Newquay and ran foundation degrees in Zoological Conservation and Marine Aquaculture. His books include *Cornwall from the Coast Path* and *Exploring the Camel Estuary*.

Professor Helen King
Professor of the History of Classical Medicine at Reading University. Her publications include *Hippocrates' Woman: Reading the female body in ancient Greece* and *Greek and Roman Medicine*. Holds research fellowships at Cambridge, Newcastle and in the Netherlands and visiting professorships in the US and Canada and at the Peninsula Medical School (Exeter and Plymouth).

Caroline Knight
Architectural historian specialising in 16th- to 18th-century British architectural and social history. She studied History and History of Art at London University, followed by an MA at the Courtauld Institute. She is Course Director of the V&A's High Renaissance-Baroque Year Course, author of many articles and of *London's Country Houses*.

Dr Jarl Kremeier
Art historian specialising in 18th- and 19th-century architecture and decorative arts and teaches Art History at the Berlin College of Music. He studied at the Universities of Würzburg, Berlin and the Courtauld and is a contributor to Macmillan's *Dictionary of Art* and author of books on the Würzburg Residenz and the Baroque gardens at Herrenhausen.

Dr Helen Langdon
Studied at Cambridge, and received a doctorate from the Courtauld. She has contributed to many academic journals, and is the author of several books, including *The Gallery Goers Guide*, *Claude Lorrain*, *Holbein*, and *Caravaggio: a Life*. In 2003, she was Assistant Director at the British School in Rome and is now a Research Fellow there. Has also been a Research Scholar at the Getty Institute, LA.

Professor Richard Langham Smith
Music historian and broadcaster with a particular interest in early music and 19th- and 20th-century French music. He has published widely on Debussy and Berlioz and has taught at Lancaster and Exeter universities and the Royal College of Music. In 1994 he was admitted to the *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* at the rank of Chevalier. He read Music at York University where he specialised in Baroque performance.

Dr Luca Leoncini
Art historian specialising in 15th-century Italian painting. His first degree and PhD were from Rome University followed by research at the Warburg Institute in London. He has published articles on the classical tradition in Italian art of the 15th century and contributed to the Macmillan *Dictionary of Art*. He has also written on Mantegna and Renaissance drawings.

Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Edinburgh and a specialist in the history and culture of ancient Iran, Egypt and Greece. He studied Classics and Drama at Hull University and obtained his MA in Ancient History and PhD from Cardiff University. He has contributed to history documentaries for Channel 4, the History Channel and the BBC.

Rowena Loverance
Byzantine art historian specialising in sculpture, mosaics and icons. She studied History and Archaeology at Oxford and is Head of e-learning at the British Museum and a Visiting Research Fellow at King's College, London. Her publications include the illustrated history *Byzantium* and *Christian Art*.

Dr Alexey Makhrov
Russian art historian and a graduate of the St Petersburg Academy of Arts. Obtained his PhD from the University of St Andrews followed by post-doctoral work as a Research Fellow at Exeter University. He is now studying International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies Geneva.

Dennis Marks
An acclaimed television producer and broadcast executive for thirty years, Dennis' career ranged from directing cultural and historical documentaries as Head of Music for BBC television, followed by four years as General Director of English National Opera. He writes and presents major events and historical travelogues for BBC Radio and is currently preparing a television series on operatic history.

Nigel McGilchrist
Writer and lecturer now living near Orvieto producing olive oil and wine. Worked for the Italian Ministry of Arts in the field of wall-painting conservation and has taught at Rome University, the University of Massachusetts and was Dean of European Studies for a consortium of American Universities. For six years he walked every path and village of the sixty inhabited Greek islands which culminated in the twenty volume *McGilchrist's Greek Islands*, abbreviated to the *Blue Guide to The Aegean Islands*.

Nigel McGilchrist

John McNeill

Fabrizio Nevola

Charles Nicholl

Geoffrey Norris

Cathy Oakes

Alan Ogden

Amanda Patton

Simon Rees

John McNeill
Specialist in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, with degrees in art history from the University of East Anglia and the Courtauld. He lectures at Birkbeck College's Faculty of Continuing Education, Birkbeck College and Oxford's Department of Continuing Education. He is Honorary Secretary of the British Archaeological Association and author of the *Blue Guide: Normandy* and *Blue Guide: Loire Valley*. Has edited collections of essays on mediaeval Anjou, King's Lynn and the Fens and the mediaeval cloister.

Dr Georgina Muskett
Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool and specialises in Greek art from the prehistoric to the Hellenistic periods. She is the author of *Mycenaean Art: a psychological approach* and has led several archaeology tours in mainland Greece, the Greek islands and southern Turkey.

Dr Fabrizio Nevola
Senior lecturer in Architectural History at the University of Bath, specialising in urban and architectural history of Early Modern Italy. He obtained his PhD at the Courtauld Institute and has held fellowships at the University of Warwick, the Medici Archive Project, and Harvard University's Villa I Tatti (Florence).

Christopher Newall
Lecturer and writer specialising in 19th-century British Art. A graduate of the Courtauld Institute he has curated exhibitions in museums in Britain, the USA, Italy, Mexico and Japan, and, on behalf of the British Council, in Germany and Spain. He is the author of books on Frederick Leighton, the Grosvenor Gallery and Victorian Watercolours and he organised the 2004 Tate Britain exhibition, *Pre-Raphaelite Vision: Truth to Nature*.

Charles Nicholl
Author of the acclaimed biography, *Leonardo da Vinci: the Flights of the Mind* and numerous other books, most recently, *The Lodger,* an intimate study of Shakespeare's life in London in the first years of the 17th century. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and recipient of the Hawthornden prize, the James Tait Black prize for biography and the Crime Writers' Association 'Gold Dagger' award for non-fiction.

Dr Tom Nickson
Lecturer in Medieval Art & Architecture at the University of York. He studied Art History at Cambridge and the Courtauld Institute and his interests span from Palermo to Prague. His research and publications have focused on the art and architecture of mediaeval Spain, especially artistic contacts between Spain's different religious communities.

Geoffrey Norris
A leading specialist on piano-playing and a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio 3. He was for many years the Chief Music Critic of *The Daily Telegraph*. His publications include *Rachmaninoff* and contributions to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

Dr Cathy Oakes
Graduated from Oxford and worked in the Education Department at the V&A. She ran the art history programme for the Department for Continuing Education at Bristol where she completed her PhD on late mediaeval Marian iconography and now holds a similar post at Oxford University. She has published on French and English Romanesque and on Marian iconography.

Alan Ogden
Following a career in international PR, Alan is now a travel writer and historian. His books include *Fortresses of Faith: the Kirchenburgen of Transylvania*; *Winds of Sorrow: Travels in Transylvania* and *Through Hitler's Back Door: SOE in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria*. He has travelled extensively in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Amanda Patton
Freelance garden designer, writer, broadcaster and artist. A member of the Society of Garden Designers and member of the Garden Media Guild, she has created Show Gardens at Chelsea and Hampton Court and has designed over 100 gardens. She lectures to garden societies and is a regular broadcaster on BBC Somerset. Her particular interest is in 20th-century and contemporary garden design.

Simon Rees
Dramaturg of Welsh National Opera since 1989. After studying English at Cambridge, he taught for two years in Italy and for three at Kyoto University. He has published novels, poetry, translations of works of art history and reviews of books on music and has written libretti for children's opera and oratorio with Welsh composer Mervyn Burtch.

Julian Richards
Archaeologist, writer and broadcaster, perhaps best known for his BBC2 series *Meet the Ancestors* and *Mapping the Town* on BBC Radio 4. He has long been involved with the archaeology of Wessex, where he has lived and worked for over 30 years. He is the author of a series of English Heritage books about Stonehenge (including the current guide book).

Bronwen Riley
Editor of the English Heritage Red Guides. After reading Classics at Oxford, she worked for *Country Life* and *Tatler* and wrote obituaries for the *Daily Telegraph*. Bewitched by Romania during the Nineties, she took an MA at the Courtauld, specialising in post-byzantine art in Romania and in 2008 published her book *Transylvania*. Other publications include the English Heritage Red Guide to Great Yarmouth Row Houses and Greyfriars' Cloister.

Sue Rollin
Archaeologist, interpreter and lecturer. She studied at London University (Institute of Archaeology and SOAS) and at Heidelberg University and her linguistic repertoire includes three ancient Near-Eastern languages and several modern European ones. She has taught at UCL, SOAS and Cambridge University and interpreted for the EU and UN. With Jane Streetly she has written *Blue Guide: Jordan* and *Istanbul: A Travellers' Guide.*

Celia Sandys
Daughter of Sir Winston Churchill's eldest child, Diana, and Cabinet Minister Duncan Sandys. She has published books on various aspects of Winston Churchill's life combining historical research with personal anecdotes, her most recent being *We Shall Not Fail – The Inspiring Leadership of Winston Churchill*. As a speaker, she draws on her intimate knowledge of Winston Churchill's personal and political life.

Dr József Sisa
Head of Department at the Research Institute for Art History at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. He specialises in the 19th century, in particular public buildings, country houses, Gothic revival and garden history. A native Hungarian with fluent English, he lectures in the UK, across Europe and the USA and co-edited *The Architecture of Historic Hungary.*

Professor Michael Slater
Emeritus Professor of Victorian Literature at Birkbeck College, University of London, and a Past President of both the International Dickens

Julian Richards

Bronwen Riley

József Sisa

Michael Slater

Jan Smaczny

Daniel Snowman

Joachim Strupp

Roderick Swanston

Jane Taylor

Fellowship and the Dickens Society of America. His publications include *Dickens and Women* and *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Dickens* and the widely-acclaimed *Charles Dickens*. For many years he was the editor of *The Dickensian* and he has lectured on Dickens and other Victorian writers to a wide variety of audiences worldwide.

Professor Jan Smaczny
Hamilton Harty Chair of Music at Queen's University, Belfast, and an authority on Czech music. An author, broadcaster and journalist, he has published books on the Prague Provisional Theatre, Dvořák's Cello Concerto and music in 19th-century Ireland. He is a graduate of the University of Oxford, has studied at the Charles University in Prague and has worked extensively in university education.

Daniel Snowman
Social and cultural historian with degrees from Cambridge and Cornell. He worked for many years at the BBC producing and presenting radio features on musical, cultural and historical subjects. His books include studies of the Amadeus Quartet, Plácido Domingo and the cultural impact of The Hitler Emigrés and, most recently, *The Gilded Stage: A Social History of Opera*.

Andrew Spooner
Military historian specialising in the Great War and has operated his own battlefield tours since 1988. He organises specialist study days for colleges and museums throughout the country and is a regular visiting lecturer at the Imperial War Museum Duxford. He has appeared in documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4.

Jane Streetly
Co-author of *Blue Guide: Jordan* and *Istanbul: A Traveller's Guide*. She was born and brought up in Trinidad, studied French and Spanish at university and now works as a conference interpreter and travel writer. She is a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and has travelled widely throughout Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

Dr Joachim Strupp
Fellow at the University of Buckingham and organises adult art education events and tours. He studied Art History at the universities of Nuremberg and St Andrews, where he also taught and has lived in Venice and Florence for several years. He specialises in the sculpture of the Italian Renaissance, though his interests include German and Italian art of most ages.

Roderick Swanston
Music historian, critic and lecturer, formerly a Professor at the Royal College of Music and President of the Incorporated Society of Musicians (2008–2009). He is a broadcaster on BBC Radio 3 and 4, widely known for combining immense learning with wit and enthusiasm and is a regular speaker on Martin Randall Travel festivals.

Jane Taylor
Has worked as teacher, publisher, writer, photographer and television producer. She studied Mediaeval History and Moral Philosophy at the University of St Andrews and since 1989 has lived in Amman. Her books include *Testament to the Bushmen* (with Laurens van der Post), *Imperial Istanbul, Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataeans, Yemen: Land and People* (with Sarah Searight) and *Jordan: Images from the Air.*

Neil Taylor
A leading expert on the Baltic States, he travels there as visiting university lecturer, tourism consultant and tour leader. He read Chinese at Cambridge and has worked in tourism in China, the USSR and many Third World countries. His publications include *The Bradt Guide: Estonia, The Bradt Guide: Tallinn, The Bradt Guide: Baltic Cities, A Footprints Guide to Berlin.*

Gail Turner
Art historian, lecturer and artist with a special interest in Spanish history and art. She read Modern History at Oxford, and completed her MA at the Courtauld. She has worked at Tate Britain, the Arts Council, as a consultant for Christie's and at the Courtauld and lectures for various institutions including the National Trust, the Art Fund, and also for the University of Cambridge International Summer School and the Courtauld Institute Summer Course.

David Vickers
Musicologist, author, journalist, broadcaster and lecturer. He works as a project consultant for many early music groups, conductors and singers. He is co-editor of *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia,* is preparing new editions of several of Handel's music dramas and is a critic for *The Gramophone*, *BBC Radio 3* and *Goldberg*. He also writes essays for record labels including BIS, Chandos, Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI and Harmonia Mundi.

Dr Rose Walker
Classicist and art historian specialising in mediaeval Spain. She studied at Oxford, Birkbeck and obtained her PhD at the Courtauld. Her book *Views of Transition: Liturgy and Illumination in Medieval Spain* was published by the British Library. She lectures at the Courtauld, V&A and at Morley College, and in 2011–12 will be an Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck College.

Dr Antonia Whitley
Art historian and lecturer specialising in the Italian Renaissance. She obtained her PhD from the Warburg Institute, University of London, on Sienese society in the 15th century and has published articles on related topics and lectured for the National Gallery. She currently teaches at King's College, London, and has led many tours in Italy.

Richard Wigmore
Music writer, lecturer and broadcaster for BBC Radio 3. He writes for *The Daily Telegraph, BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone* and gives classes in Lied history and interpretation at Birkbeck College, London. He read French and German at Cambridge and later studied Music at the Guildhall. His publications include *Schubert: the complete song texts* and *Pocket Guide to Haydn*.

Dr Sarah Wilson
Art historian and curator, and currently Head of MA programmes at the Courtauld. She read English Literature at Oxford and has an MA and PhD from the Courtauld. Curatorships include *Paris – Capital of the Arts, 1937–1957* at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Raoul Dufy retrospective at the Hayward Gallery. Her books include *Matisse* and *The Visual World of French Theory: Figurations.* In 1997 she was made Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres for services to French art and culture.

Neil Taylor

David Vickers

Rose Walker

Antonia Whitley

Richard Wigmore

BOOKING DETAILS

MAKING A BOOKING

1. PROVISIONAL BOOKING

We recommend that you contact us first to make a provisional booking which we will hold for one week. To confirm it please send the booking form and deposit within this period.

2. DEFINITE BOOKING

Fill in the booking form and send it to us with the deposit (specified in the price paragraph of the tour description). It is important that you read the Booking Conditions at this stage, and that you sign the booking form. Full payment is required if you are booking within ten weeks of departure.

3. OUR CONFIRMATION

Upon receipt of the booking form and deposit we shall send you confirmation of your booking. After this your deposit is non-returnable except in the special circumstances mentioned in the Booking Conditions. Further details of the tour will also be sent at this stage.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

PLEASE READ THESE

You need to sign your assent to these booking conditions on the booking form.

OUR PROMISES TO YOU

We aim to be fair, reasonable and sympathetic in all our dealings with clients, and to act always with integrity.

We will meet all our legal and regulatory responsibilities, often going beyond the minimum obligations.

We aim to provide full and accurate information about our holidays. If there are changes, we will tell you promptly.

If something does go wrong, we will try to put it right. Our overriding aim is to ensure that every client is satisfied with our services.

ALL WE ASK OF YOU

We ask that you read the information we send to you.

SPECIFIC TERMS

Our contract with you
From the time we receive your signed booking form and initial payment, a contract exists between you and Martin Randall Travel Ltd.

Eligibility
We reserve the right to refuse to accept a booking without necessarily giving a reason. You need to have a level of fitness which would not spoil other participants' enjoyment of the holiday by slowing them down – see the 'How strenuous?' guidance at the end of every tour description and the entry on page 6 of this brochure. With this in mind, we do not accept bookings from anyone who would be aged 81 or over at the time of the tour (we make an exception for certain MRT music festivals).

Insurance
It is a requirement of booking that you have adequate holiday insurance. Cover for medical treatment, repatriation, loss of property and cancellation charges must be included. Insurance can be obtained from most insurance companies, banks, travel agencies and (in the UK) many retail outlets including post offices.

Passports and visas
British citizens must have valid passports for all tours outside the United Kingdom. For most countries the passport needs to be valid for six months beyond the date of the tour. If visas are required we will advise UK citizens about obtaining them. Nationals of other countries should ascertain whether visas are required in their case, and obtain them if they are.

If you cancel
If you have to cancel your participation on a tour, there would be a charge which varies according to the period of notice you give. Up to 57 days before the tour the deposit only is forfeited. Thereafter a percentage of the total cost of the tour will be due:

between 56 and 29 days:	40%
between 28 and 15 days:	60%
between 14 days and 3 days:	80%
within 48 hours:	100%

We take as the day of cancellation that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

If we cancel the tour
We might decide to cancel a tour if at any time up to eight weeks before there were insufficient bookings for it to be viable. We would refund everything you had paid to us. We might also cancel a tour if hostilities, civil unrest, natural disaster or other circumstances amounting to force majeure affect the region to which the tour was due to go.

Safety and security
If the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises against travel to places visited on a tour, we would cancel the tour or adjust the itinerary to avoid the risky area. In the event of cancellation before the tour commenced we would give you a full refund. We would also treat sympathetically a wish to withdraw from a tour to a troubled region even if the FCO does not advise against travel there.

Consumer protection
Holidays in this brochure are protected by the ATOL scheme because we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. This means that in the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid to us for an advance booking. Holidays which do not include flights are similarly protected by the AITO Trust.

The limits of our liabilities
As principal, we accept responsibility for all ingredients of a tour, except those in which the principle of force majeure prevails. Our obligations and responsibilities are also limited where international conventions apply in respect of air, sea or rail carriers, including the Warsaw Convention and its various updates.

If we make changes
Circumstances might arise which prevent us from operating a tour exactly as advertised. We would try to devise a satisfactory alternative, but if the change represents a significant loss to the tour we would offer compensation. If you decide to cancel because the alternative we offer is not acceptable we would give a full refund.

English Law
These conditions form part of your contract with Martin Randall Travel Ltd and are governed by English law. All proceedings shall be within the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

Booking Form

NAME OF TOUR

DATES

TOUR CODE

TRAVELLERS' NAMES

Give your name as you would like it to appear on documents issued to other tour participants – in block capitals please.

1

2

ROOM TYPE – please tick

Twin 2 beds	Double 1 bed	Single

TRAVEL – please tick

Group Travel (air or rail)	No Travel (making own arrangements)

YOUR DETAILS – in block capitals please

Address

Postcode

Telephone (home)

Telephone (work)

Mobile

Fax number

Email

☐ Please tick if you do NOT want to receive updates on our range of cultural tours and music festivals by email.

☐ Please tick if you do NOT want to receive any more of our brochures.

Date of birth	Traveller 1
	Traveller 2
Occupation, present/former (optional – our curiosity only)	Traveller 1
	Traveller 2

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS – only if required for some UK tours

National Trust (England, Scotland or affiliate)

1 Expiry

2 Expiry

English Heritage

1 Expiry

2 Expiry

FURTHER INFORMATION or special requests.
Please mention dietary requirements.

YOUR NEXT OF KIN or contact in case of emergency.

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Relationship

PASSPORT DETAILS. Essential for airlines and in case of emergency on tour (not applicable for tours in the UK).

	Title	Surname	First Names	Nationality
1				
2				

	Date of Birth (DD/MM/YY)	Place of Birth	Passport Number	Place of Issue	Date of Issue (DD/MM/YY)	Date of Expiry (DD/MM/YY)
1						
2						

FELLOW TRAVELLER

If you have made a booking for someone who does not have the same address as yourself, please give their details here. We shall then send correspondence and documents directly to them.

If you would also like the invoice to be sent to the fellow traveller's address, please tick:

☐

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Next of kin

Name

Relationship

Telephone

PAYMENT

EITHER Deposit(s)

deposits are per person £

OR Full Payment £

Full payment is required if you are booking within ten weeks of departure.

We prefer payment by cheque, debit card or bank transfer, although we can also accept payment by credit card.

CHEQUE. Please make cheques payable to Martin Randall Travel Ltd, and write the tour code on the back (eg MY123).

DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD. I wish to pay by Visa, Mastercard or Amex.
Please charge my card.

Card no.

Start date Expiry date

BANK TRANSFER. Please give your surname and tour code (eg MY123) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Account name: Martin Randall Travel Ltd
Royal Bank of Scotland, Drummonds, 49 Charing Cross, London SW1A 2DX
Account number 0019 6050 Sort code 16-00-38
IBAN: GB71 RBOS 1600 3800 1960 50; Swift/BIC: RBOS GB2L

Please tick here if you have paid by bank transfer: ☐

I have read and agree to the Booking Conditions on behalf of all listed on this form.

Signature

Date

MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

ART • ARCHITECTURE • GASTRONOMY • ARCHAEOLOGY • HISTORY • MUSIC

Voysey House, Barley Mow Passage, London, United Kingdom W4 4GF
Telephone 020 8742 3355 Fax 020 8742 7766 info@martinrandall.co.uk www.martinrandall.com

3622 ATOL PROTECTED
AITO Assured 5085

DATES

FOR A LIST OF HOLIDAYS BY COUNTRY, SEE PAGES 7–9

SEPTEMBER 2011

7–14	**Hungary** (MY 950) *Dr József Sisa*	75
7–11	**Persia in Europe** (MY 968) *Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones*	195
20–22	**Moore & Hepworth** (MY 971) *David Mitchinson*	195

OCTOBER 2011

1– 7	**Gastronomic Piedmont** (MY 976) *Carla Capalbo*	81
1–10	**Classical Greece** (MY 985) *Dr Georgina Muskett*	71
3–10	**Bilbao to Bayonne** (MY 978) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	146
3–12	**Great Houses of the North** (MY 979) *Gail Bent*	184
3–14	**Ancient Egypt** (MY 997) *Dr Karen Exell*	27
3–15	**Sicily** (MY 977) *Dr Roberto Cobianchi*	120
4–12	**Essential Jordan** (MY 984) *Jane Taylor*	126
5– 8	**Opera in Cardiff** (MY 999) *Simon Rees*	192
5– 9	**Ravenna & Urbino** (MY 986) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	98
5–13	**The Heart of Portugal** (MY 981) *Adam Hopkins*	134
6–15	**The Heart of Italy** (MY 991) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	109
11–18	**Modern Art on the Cote d'Azur** (MY 980) *Vivien Hamilton*	52
13–18	**The Venetian Hills** (MY 988) *Clare Ford-Wille*	89
15–18	**Der Rosenkavalier at La Scala** (MY 102) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	84
16–23	**Dark Age Brilliance** (MY 992) *John McNeill*	96
17–21	**In Churchill's Footsteps** (MY 106) *The Hon. Celia Sandys & Terry Charman*	183
17–23	**Caravaggio** (MY 993) *Dr Helen Langdon*	117
17–26	**Castile & León** (MY 994) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	145
17–27	**Andalucía** (MY 995) *Adam Hopkins*	154
18–22	**Writers' Florence** (MY 101) *Jonathan Keates*	104
19–28	**Exploring Middle Egypt** (MY 998) *Nicole Douek*	33
23–29	**A FESTIVAL OF MUSIC IN FLORENCE**	101
25– 3	**Israel & Palestine** (MY 104) *Dr Garth Gilmour*	78
26–30	**Art in Madrid** (MY 996) *Dr Xavier Bray*	148
29– 2	**San Gimignano** (MY 103) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	105
31– 2	**Chamber music, Jesmond Dene The Vienna Piano Trio** (MY 113)	194
31–12	**Sicily** (MY 116) *Christopher Newall*	120

NOVEMBER 2011

1– 5	**Wexford Opera** (MY 111) *Prof. Jan Smaczny*	77
1– 5	**Venetian Palaces** (MY 107) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	92
4–6	**Music weekend, the Castle Hotel The Vienna Piano Trio** (MY 114)	194
7–13	**Florence** (MY 109) *Emma Rose Barber*	102
8–12	**Valencia** (MY 110) *Adam Hopkins*	150
13–19	**Palermo Rediscovered** (MY 115) *Dr Roberto Cobianchi*	122
17–22	**Connoisseur's Rome** (MY 117) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	116
18–23	**Connoisseur's Rome** (MY 120) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	116
21–27	**The Art History of Venice** (MY 121) *Polly Buston*	90
24–28	**The Lucerne Piano Festival** (MY 123) *Geoffrey Norris*	162
25–27	**Politics & Politicians: The Castle Hotel, Taunton**	193

DECEMBER 2011

20–27	**St Petersburg at Christmas** (MY 136) *Dr Alexey Makhrov*	139
20–27	**Vienna at Christmas** (MY 130) *Dr Jarl Kremeier*	15
20–27	**Music in Berlin at Christmas** (MY 137) *Tom Abbott*	56
20–27	**Budapest at Christmas** (MY 133) *Dr József Sisa*	74
20–27	**Palermo at Christmas** (MY 139) *Christopher Newall*	122
21–28	**Christmas in the Desert** (MY 132) *Nicole Douek*	31
21–28	**Palermo at Christmas** (MY 138) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	122
	York at Christmas	175

JANUARY 2012

12–15	**Cézanne in Paris** (MY 155) *Dr Sarah Wilson*	44
23–28	**Opera in Vienna** (MY 160) *Daniel Snowman*	14
27–29	**Music weekend, the Castle Hotel The Academy of Ancient Music**	194
28– 2	**Mozart in Salzburg** (MY 159) *Richard Wigmore*	13

FEBRUARY 2012

7–14	**Leonardo & Michaelangelo** (MY 167) *Charles Nicholl & Dr Joachim Strupp*	114
7–16	**Israel & Palestine** (MY 161) *Dr Garth Gilmour*	78
9–14	**Connoisseur's Rome** (MY 165) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	116
14–19	**Music in Berlin** (MY 163) *Prof. Jan Smaczny & Tom Abbott*	56
17–19	**Music weekend, the Castle Hotel The Chilingirian Quartet**	194
20–26	**Florence** (MY 168) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	102
28–12	**Deserts & Oases** (MY 170) *Nicole Douek*	32

MARCH 2012

2– 4	**Historians, Jesmond Dene House**	193
2–10	**Walking in the Canary Islands** (MY 174) *Adam Hopkins & Gaby Macphedran*	159
5–12	**Palestine** (MY 172) *Dr Felicity Cobbing*	133
5–16	**Ancient Egypt** (MY 171) *Dr Angus Graham*	27
6–10	**Venetian Palaces** (MY 176) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	92
14–18	**Art in Madrid** (MY 180) *Dr Xavier Bray*	148
16–22	**The Art History of Venice** (MY 181) *Polly Buston*	90
17–24	**British Actions in the Straits** (MY 185) *Adam Hopkins*	158
19–24	**Pompeii & Herculaneum** (MY 189) *Angus Haldane*	118
19–26	**Granada & Córdoba** (MY 187) *Rose Walker*	153
19–27	**Cairo & Alexandria** (MY 184)	29
19–31	**Sicily** (MY 186) *Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves*	120
20–28	**Normans in the South** (MY 188) *John McNeill*	119
23–25	**Music weekend, the Castle Hotel The Nash Ensemble**	194
23–30	**Gastronomic Andalucía** (MY 197) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	155
24–31	**The Heart of Italy** (MY 192) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	109
28– 3	**Gardens of the Riviera** (MY 200) *Caroline Holmes*	53
31– 4	**Charles Dickens** (MY 196) *Prof. Michael Slater*	180
31– 8	**Essential Jordan** (MY 198) *Sue Rollin & Jane Streetly*	126
31–11	**Morocco** (MY 199) *Dr Amira Bennison*	129
	The Budapest Spring Festival	75

APRIL 2012

2– 9	**Semana Santa in Spain** (my 201) *Adam Hopkins*	157
3–13	**Transoxiana** (my 213) *Prof. Hugh Kennedy*	198
9–18	**Classical Turkey** (my 204) *Henry Hurst*	165
10–15	**Palladian Villas** (my 206) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	85
10–18	**Essential Jordan** (my 205) *Dr Felicity Cobbing*	126
11–15	**Ravenna & Urbino** (my 207) *Clare Ford-Wille*	98
11–17	**Gardens of the Riviera** (my 208) *Steven Desmond*	53
15–20	**The History of Impressionism** (my 209) *Dr Frances Fowle*	40
16–20	**In Churchill's Footsteps** (my 211) *The Hon. Celia Sandys & Terry Charman*	183
16–22	**Genoa & Turin** (my 212) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	82
16–22	**French Gothic** (my 214) *Dr Tom Nickson*	39
16–22	**Istanbul** (my 226) *Jane Taylor*	164
16–23	**The Veneto** (my 216) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	87
17–21	**Lisbon Neighbourhoods** (my 215) *Adam Hopkins*	136
17–24	**Modern Art on the Côte d'Azur** (my 217) *Vivien Hamilton*	52
19–25	**Gardens & Villas of the Italian Lakes** (my 218) *Steven Desmond*	80
21–28	**Granada & Córdoba** (my 219) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	153
21–30	**Classical Greece** (my 221) *Em. Professor Trevor Bryce*	71
22–29	**Courts of Northern Italy** (my 222) *Dr Fabrizio Nevola*	95
23–29	**Lucca** (my 223) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	100
25–29	**Flemish Painting** (my 228)	19
27–29	**Music weekend, Jesmond Dene** **The Fitzwilliam String Quartet**	194
29– 5	**Opera in Dresden & Leipzig** (my 230) *Roderick Swanston*	61
30– 5	**Turner & the Sea** (my 225) *Dr David Cordingly*	190
30– 7	**Walking in Sicily** (my 231) *Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves*	125
30– 8	**Walking on Samos & Chios** (my 227) *Nigel McGilchrist*	73
	Opera in Spain	151

MAY 2012

1–11	**Transoxiana** (my 232) *Sue Rollin*	198
2–15	**East Coast Galleries** (my 241) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	196
6–20	**The Road to Rome** (my 235) *John McNeill*	112
7–13	**Istanbul** (my 236) *Rowena Loverance*	164
7–14	**Walking in Tuscany** (my 237) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	106
8–17	**Sardinia** (my 234) *Dr Roberto Cobianchi*	124
9–14	**Czech Music in Brno & Prague** (my 238) *Prof. Jan Smaczny*	22
11–19	**Hill Walking in Extremadura** (my 239) *Adam Hopkins & Gaby Macphedran*	151
13–18	**Stonehenge** (my 245) *Julian Richards*	171
14–20	**St Petersburg** (my 256) *Dr Alexey Makhrov*	139
14–22	**Lebanon** (my 229) *Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones*	128
20–26	**Walking Hadrian's Wall** (my 253) *Prof. David Breeze*	169
21–28	**The Cotswolds** (my 260) *Dr Steven Blake*	174
21–30	**Great Houses of the North** (my 255) *Gail Bent*	184
23–30	**Walking in Cornwall** (my 247) *Dr Michael Kent*	176
26– 1	**Art & Music in Dresden** (my 265) *Dr Jarl Kremeier*	60
26– 2	**Gardens of Tuscany** (my 259) *Dr Katie Campbell*	108
27– 3	**Ottoman Turkey** (my 264) *Sue Rollin*	163
28– 1	**West Country Churches** (my 263) *Dr Cathy Oakes*	168
29– 6	**Brittany** (my 258) *Caroline Holmes*	38
30– 5	**Handel in Halle** (my 250) *David Vickers*	67
31– 7	**THE RHINE VALLEY MUSIC FESTIVAL**	55
	Oslo, Gothenburg & Copenhagen	26
	Bergen Music Festival	132
	Naples: Art, Antiquities & Opera	119
	Eastern Turkey	164

JUNE 2012

1– 5	**Klimt & Secessionist Vienna** (my 267)	16
5–10	**Palladian Villas** (my 269) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	85
5–16	**Walking to Santiago** (my 268) *Adam Hopkins & Gaby Macphedran*	143
6– 9	**Matisse & his World** (my 270) *Monica Bohm-Duchen*	45
8–16	**Transylvania** (my 272) *Alan Ogden*	137
9–16	**Mediaeval Burgundy** (my 275) *John McNeill*	46
11–19	**Norway: Art, Architecture, Landscape** (my 288) *Dr Harry Charrington*	131
13–17	**Ravenna & Urbino** (my 271) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	98
13–21	**Baroque & Rococo** (my 281) *Tom Abbott*	69
14–19	**Ardgowan** (my 280) *Caroline Knight*	189
17–23	**Roman & Mediaeval Provence** (my 273) *Dr Alexandra Gajewski*	50
18–25	**Courts of Northern Italy** (my 278) *Emma Rose Barber*	95
19–24	**Art in Switzerland** (my 276) *Dr Alexey Makhrov*	161
20–27	**Armenia** (my 274) *Alan Ogden*	10
20–28	**Great Houses of the East** (my 289)	186
21–25	**Opera in Paris** (my 290) *Roderick Swanston*	43
24–30	**German Romanesque** (my 295)	65
25– 2	**The Victorian Achievement** (my 296) *Christopher Newall*	181
28– 5	**Danish Art & Design** (my 297) *Dr Shona Kallestrup*	25
	Country House Opera	175
	The Schubertiade	18
	Drottningholm & Confidencen	160
	West Country Gardens	175

JULY 2012

2– 6	**The Battle of Waterloo** (my 299) *Major Gordon Corrigan*	20
2– 6	**Mediaeval Middle England** (my 298) *John McNeill*	167
5– 9	**Verona Opera** (my 304) *Clare Ford-Wille*	88
7–13	**Dürer & Riemenschneider** (my 300) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	68
8–12	**Savonlinna Opera** (my 310) *Simon Rees*	37
9–16	**North Wales** (my 307) *Peter Cattermole & Neil Johnstone*	172
9–21	**The Baltic States** (my 305) *Neil Taylor*	35
11–15	**Flemish Painting** (my 303) *Clare Ford-Wille*	19
14–18	**Savonlinna Opera** (my 312) *Daniel Snowman*	37
20–28	**Mitteldeutschland** (my 313) *Dr Jarl Kremeier*	63
	Opera at Aix & Orange	51
	Trasimeno Music Festival	111

	Torre del Lago	101
	Operetta in Austria	18
	Shakespeare & his World	179
	Lucerne Summer	162

August 2012

2– 6	**Verona Opera** (MY 324) *Dr Roberto Cobianchi*	88
16–24	**Baroque & Rococo** (MY 335) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	69
17–24	**THE DANUBE MUSIC FESTIVAL**	12
20–25	**Grampian Gardens** (MY 339) *Caroline Holmes*	175
20– 1	**The Baltic States** (MY 340) *Neil Taylor*	35
23–27	**Verona Opera** (MY 344) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	88
28– 4	**The Victorian Achievement** (MY 346) *Dr Paul Atterbury*	181
31–12	**The Road to Santiago** (MY 349) *John McNeill*	141
	Opera in Pesaro	111
	Salzburg Summer Festival	12
	Walking the Danube	12
	Grampian Gardens	175

September 2012

1–12	**Frank Lloyd Wright** (MZ 350) *Dr Harry Charrington*	197
2– 7	**The History of Impressionism** (MZ 357) *Chloe Johnson*	40
3– 9	**Gaudí & the Guggenheim** (MZ 354) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	147
3– 9	**Istanbul** (MZ 367) *Jane Taylor*	164
4–10	**Villas & Gardens of Campagna Romana** (MZ 356) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	110
4–11	**Great Houses of the South West** (MZ 366)	188
4–14	**Transoxiana** (MZ 364)	198
7–10	**Poets & the Somme** (MZ 359) *Andrew Spooner*	42
7–18	**Walking to Santiago** (MZ 352) *Adam Hopkins & Gaby Macphedran*	143
8–17	**Classical Greece** (MZ 368) *Dr Andrew Farrington*	71
9–15	**Walking Hadrian's Wall** (MZ 351) *Prof. Richard Hingley*	169
10–16	**Lucca** (MZ 353) *Dr Antonia Whitley*	100
10–17	**The Cotswolds** (MZ 373) *Dr Steven Blake*	174
11–20	**Sardinia** (MZ 365) *Dr Roberto Cobianchi*	124
13–19	**Music in the Saxon Hills** (MZ 355) *David Vickers & Tom Abbott*	62
14–23	**Cathedrals of England**	175
16–23	**Courts of Northern Italy** (MZ 360) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	95
16–23	**The Heart of Italy** (MZ 375) *Dr Helen Langdon*	109
17–23	**History of Medicine** (MZ 361) *Prof. Helen King*	99
17–23	**St Petersburg** (MZ 362) *Dr Alexey Makhrov*	139
17–24	**Bohemia** (MZ 378) *Michael Ivory*	23
17–24	**Walking the Thames Valley** (MZ 379) *Dr Paul Atterbury*	178
17–26	**Castile & León** (MZ 363) *Dr Tom Nickson*	145
20–26	**Gardens & Villas of the Italian Lakes** (MZ 371) *Steven Desmond*	80
21–28	**Berlin, Potsdam, Dresden** (MZ 370) *Dr Jarl Kremeier*	58
21–29	**Transylvania** (MZ 374) *Bronwen Riley*	198
24–28	**THE DIVINE OFFICE** **A Choral Festival in Oxford**	193
24– 1	**Cave Art of France** (MZ 382) *Dr Paul Bahn*	49
24– 2	**Walking on Samos & Chios** (MZ 386) *Nigel McGilchrist*	73
24– 5	**Ancient Egypt** (MZ 383) *Dr Karen Exell*	27
24– 6	**Sicily** (MZ 377) *Christopher Newall*	120
25– 1	**Connoisseur's Prague** (MZ 380) *Michael Ivory*	24
26– 4	**The Heart of Portugal** (MZ 384) *Adam Hopkins*	134
29– 8	**Classical Greece** (MZ 385) *Henry Hurst*	71
	Haydn in Eisenstadt	18
	The Schubertiade	18

October 2012

2– 8	**Beethoven in Bonn** (MZ 414) *Prof. Barry Cooper*	66
3– 7	**Ravenna & Urbino** (MZ 387) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	98
4– 9	**Ancient Rome** (MZ 386) *Angus Haldane*	115
6–12	**Gastronomic Piedmont** (MZ 396)	81
8–17	**Classical Turkey** (MZ 389)	165
9–14	**Palladian Villas** (MZ 392) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	85
9–15	**Toulouse & Albi** (MZ 395) *Dr Alexandra Gajewski*	47
9–17	**Essential Jordan** (MZ 393) *Jane Taylor*	126
9–17	**Normans in the South** (MZ 394)	119
10–15	**Pompeii & Herculaneum** (MZ 391) *Angus Haldane*	118
13–21	**Sinai** (MZ 405) *Nicole Douek*	34
14–21	**Dark Age Brilliance** (MZ 400) *John McNeill*	96
15–20	**Pompeii & Herculaneum** (MZ 388) *Dr Ffiona Gilmore Eaves*	118
15–22	**Walking in Sicily** (MZ 413) *Christoper Newall*	125
15–22	**Gastronomic Spain** (MZ 398) *Gijs van Hensbergen*	149
15–22	**Walking in Tuscany** (MZ 402) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	106
15–25	**Andalucía** (MZ 403) *Adam Hopkins*	154
16–20	**Writers' Florence** (MZ 397) *Jonathan Keates*	104
16–23	**Modern Art on the Côte d'Azur** (MZ 401) *Monica Bohm-Duchen*	52
16–25	**Israel & Palestine** (MZ 411) *Dr Garth Gilmour*	78
21–28	**Villas of the Veneto** (MZ 408) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	86
22–28	**Genoa & Turin** (MZ 412) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	82
24–28	**Writers' Venice** (MZ 410) *Gregory Dowling*	94
24–28	**Art in Madrid** (MZ 409) *Gail Turner*	148
	Gastronomy & Walking in Lebanon	128
	Opera in Cardiff	192
	Parma Verdi Festival	84
	Helsinki Opera	37
	Wexford Opera	77

November 2012

6–11	**Venice Revisited** (mz 423) *Dr Luca Leoncini*	91
12–18	**Florence** (MZ 427) *Dr Roberto Cobianchi*	102
13–17	**Venetian Palaces** (MZ 428) *Dr Michael Douglas-Scott*	92
18–24	**Palermo Rediscovered** (MZ 424) *Christopher Newall*	122
19–25	**Florence Revisited** (mz 430) *Dr Joachim Strupp*	103
23–25	**Music weekend, the Castle Hotel** **The Schubert Ensemble**	194
	ROME: A FESTIVAL OF MUSIC	117
	The Lucerne Piano Festival	162
	Rabat, Fez, Marrakech	130

December 2012

We will run about ten Christmas and New Year tours. Details will be available in the summer of 2012.

MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

ART · ARCHITECTURE · GASTRONOMY · ARCHAEOLOGY · HISTORY · MUSIC · LITERATURE

Voysey House, Barley Mow Passage, London, United Kingdom W4 4GF
Telephone 020 8742 3355 Fax 020 8742 7766 info@martinrandall.co.uk

From Australia and New Zealand you can contact:
Martin Randall Marketing, PO Box 537, Toowong, Queensland 4066
Telephone 1300 55 95 95, from New Zealand +61 7 3377 0141 Fax 07 3377 0142 anz@martinrandall.com.au

From the USA and Canada you can contact:
Telephone 1800 988 6168

www.martinrandall.com

AITO Assured 5085
ATOL 3622 PROTECTED